The World's Oldest Chess Journal

BCM

BRITISH
Since 1881
CHESS MAGAZINE

Volume 145

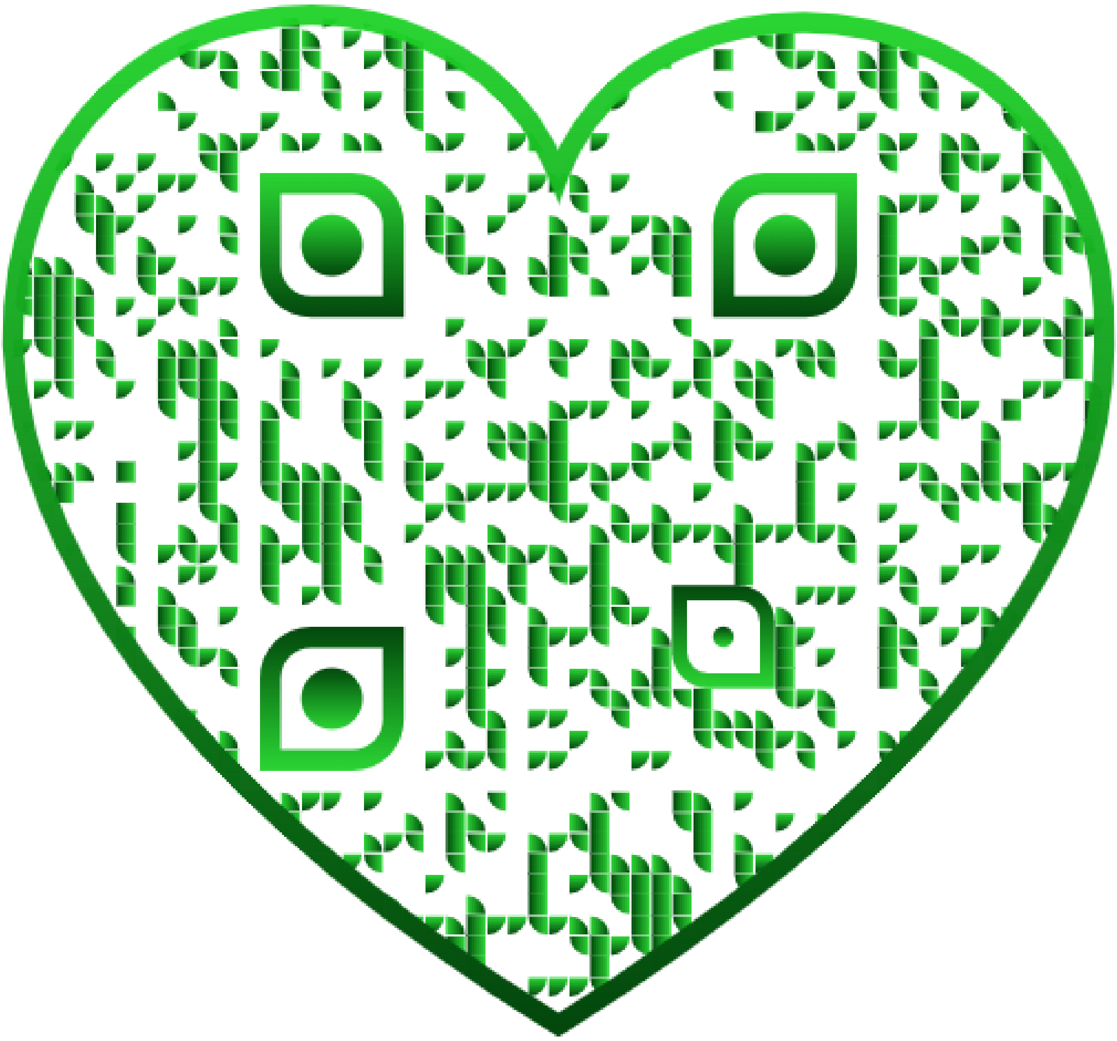
NOVEMBER
2025
£8.00

9 770007 044017 11

BCM INTERVIEW
BODHANA SIVANANDAN
BCM INTERVIEW

FROM SPORT TO SPECTACLE: WHERE DOES CHESS DRAW THE LINE?

HAS THE CHASE FOR FAME AND RECOGNITION TURNED CHESS INTO SHOWBUSINESS?
HOW FAR CAN THE GAME GO BEFORE IT STOPS BEING CHESS?



IMPRESSUM

BRITISH CHESS MAGAZINE
Founded 1881

www.britishchessmagazine.co.uk

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ISSN 0007-0440
© The British Chess Magazine Limited

Company Limited by Shares
Registered in England No 00334968

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Albany House, 14 Shute End
Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 1BJ

Subscription
support@britishchessmagazine.co.uk
12 monthly issues
UK: £64 | RoW: £96

Printed in the UK: by Lavenham Press Ltd

Cover photography:
AI-generated Art

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CHESS ENTERS A BOLD NEW ERA:

FIDE AND NORWAY CHESS CREATE A REVOLUTIONARY WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP FORMAT

The game's traditional boundaries are being redrawn – and FIDE, the world's governing chess body, has given its blessing.

In what may prove to be the most significant structural innovation in competitive chess since the introduction of rapid and blitz time controls, Norway Chess has secured FIDE approval for an audacious new concept: the Total Chess World Championship Tour. This isn't merely another tournament added to an already crowded calendar. It's a fundamental reimagining of what it means to be a complete chess player in the modern era.

The premise is elegantly disruptive. Rather than crowning separate champions in classical, rapid, and blitz chess, the new championship will identify one supreme talent who can master all three disciplines. Beginning with a pilot event in fall 2026 and launching fully in 2027, the tour will feature four annual tournaments culminating in the coronation of a FIDE World Combined Champion - a title that doesn't yet exist but may soon become one of the sport's most coveted.

"We are looking for 'The Total Chess Player,'" says Kjell Madland, CEO of Norway Chess and architect of the new championship. It's a simple statement that carries profound implications. In an era where the game's greatest minds have increasingly specialised - some dominating classical chess while others reign in faster formats - this championship demands versatility above all else.

The financial commitment underscores serious ambition: a minimum $2.7 million prize pool annually, with $750,000 on offer at each of the first three stops and $450,000 at the Finals. These figures place the tour among chess's elite money events from day one.

Perhaps most intriguing is the introduction of "Fast Classic" - a 45-minute game with 30-second increments that will receive classical chess ratings despite its accelerated pace. It's a clever compromise, maintaining the strategic depth of classical chess while addressing the reality that modern audiences increasingly demand faster, more television-friendly content.

FIDE President Arkady Dvorkovich's endorsement is unequivocal. "This is not a short-term initiative, but a long-term agreement between FIDE and Norway Chess," he emphasizes, positioning the new tour not as competition for the traditional World Championship but as its complement - a parallel track for identifying excellence across multiple dimensions.

The format is ruthlessly meritocratic: 24 elite players at each of the first three locations, with only the top four advancing to the Finals. Winners at each stop earn the title "Golden Knight," while the tour's ultimate victor claims the "Golden King" - medieval terminology for a decidedly modern conception of chess mastery.

Whether this ambitious experiment succeeds in capturing both hardcore enthusiasts and the broader audience Norway Chess explicitly targets remains to be seen. But one thing is certain: the chess world now has a compelling new question to answer - who truly is the most complete player in the game today?

BCM

FORMER WORLD CHAMPIONS REACT TO THE TOUR ANNOUNCEMENT:

Magnus Carlsen:
I LOVE THE CONCEPT
Vishy Anand:
A GROUNDBREAKING AND UNIQUE FORMAT

Magnus Carlsen, Five time World Chess Champion, shared his thoughts about the new competition: "Chess at its best is about the entire range, the ability to think deeply, and then switch gears at an instant. A combined world title finally recognizes that full spectrum. Fast classic rewards quality, rapid tests intuition, and blitz exposes your nerves, but over a season, consistency separates a great day from a great champion," Carlsen said.

"As a player I love the concept. And as FIDE Deputy President, I welcome a format that combines disciplines, is modern, and is compelling for audiences."

Viswanathan Anand, five time World Chess Champion and the current Deputy President of FIDE called the initiative "groundbreaking": "It’s a great pleasure to share this exciting moment with you all as we witness the launch of a groundbreaking chess tour with innovative rules. As a professional player, I am particularly looking forward to this tour’s unique format and the incorporation of varied time controls. This structure will truly test a play’s comprehensive abilities as it demands consistent top performance across different formats to compete for the ultimate title. I believe this tour presents both a fresh opportunity and a distinctive challenge for every participant."

Key facts about the TOTAL CHESS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP TOUR:

AT A GLANCE

- World first: A single, FIDE-recognized World Championship that unifies Fast Classic, Rapid, and Blitz into one complete test.
- Global field: 24 elite players per tournament at location 1, 2 and 3, competing across various cities. Only the four best advance to the fourth and final tournament.
- Milestone year: 2027 marks the official launch of Total Chess World Championship Tour.

QUALIFICATION TO ENTER THE TOUR:

- Direct entrants: A selected number of top-rated players qualify automatically by rating.
- Through competition: A selected number of players will qualify through eligible tournaments.

COMPETITION FORMAT:

- Three disciplines, one title: Performance in Fast Classic, Rapid, and Blitz is aggregated to determine advancement and final standings.
- Progressive elimination: Players compete through staged events across multiple locations. Cumulative results decide who moves on.
- Armageddon: Armageddon will be used for play-offs and will not be rated.

TITLES & HONOURS:

- Golden Knights: Awarded to location winners.
- Golden Rook: Awarded to the player with the highest tour points.
- Golden King: Awarded to the ultimate victor of the Total Chess World Championship.
- Pathway: The event includes Candidates qualification opportunities.

FIDE PRESIDENT ARKADY DROVKOVICH ON THE TOTAL CHESS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP TOUR:

FIDE HAS BEEN THINKING ABOUT THIS FORMAT FOR A LONG TIME

In an online interview with Sagar Shah of ChessBase India, one of the leading chess media outlets, Arkady Dvorkovich highlighted the importance and the role of the new Total Chess World Championship Tour which was recently announced by FIDE.

“FIDE has for a long time been thinking about a new format where we can combine different time controls and adjust to the reality of the faster, digital world, but also reflect the existing high interest in classical and blitz chess. We were happy that Norway Chess came up with the initiative to do something like that. It was the right time, the right moment and the right partners. From the very beginning, we had a clear understanding that we can do it only together,” Dvorkovich said.

“We do believe this [project] will bring many new spectators and excitement to the players. Most of the top players believe that it is a very interesting format”.

Dvorkovich emphasised FIDE’s position that the classical world championship title “is the most important one… but we believe it is the right time to increase the importance of other formats as well”.

The new partnership with Norway Chess is a long-term commitment, based on an eight-year contract with an option to renew for an extended period.

“I do believe that - based on the concept that we have - it will be at least equally important as Rapid and Blitz, but potentially much bigger,” Dvorkovich added.

On the subject of how the rising number of global chess events in a year has an impact on the annual chess calendar, Dvorkovich said that “in an ideal world, we should have agreements with all top events and - like in tennis - put them in a universal tour where every top event will count, but that’s not easy”. The FIDE President expressed a commitment to working with all partners to achieve a future ’universal tour,’ similar to tennis, where every top event counts, and where a consensus on time control, aligned with the exciting World Cup format, can be reached.

USA-INDIA MATCH: ENTERTAINMENT, DEGRADATION OR THE FUTURE OF CHESS?

BY: GM ALEKSANDAR COLOVIC, WWW.ALEXCOLOVIC.COM - IMAGES: ASHWIN SUBRAMANIUM

The core question about chess still remains unanswered: should chess be sold as pure entertainment? I think we will find the answer to that question soon enough – the investments in these types of events are on the rise and the market is always honest – if there is interest, there will be profits.

Checkmate - it's one of the first words we learn when learning to play chess. It is the goal of the game and the end of the game. "Checkmate: USA vs India is a chess showdown between two of the strongest nations in the world" is how the organisers (Checkmate Strategic Ventures) of this unique event advertised the series of exhibition matches between the players of these countries.

Foreseen as a showdown in two parts, the first one took place at the Esports Stadium in Arlington, Texas, on 4th October, with the return leg taking place in India at a later date. Five players from each nation compete in a series of individual matches. Both nations fielded strong players, but the categories were peculiar: the top two players of the countries were accompanied by a chess celebrity/influencer, a woman player and a young player. With this, we got Nakamura-Gukesh, Caruana-Erigaisi, influencer Levi Rozman vs ChessBase India editor Sagar Shah, Carissa Yip vs Divya Deshmukh and Tani Adewumi vs Ethan Vaz.

The format was geared towards excitement: five rounds, where each round was a game played between two players of each team. USA, as the host, played as White in all matches (India gets all white pieces in the return). The time control was 10 minutes per game, with a one-second increment once the player got below one minute. In case of draws, a five-minute game, followed by one-minute games were played, with the one-minute game continuing until there was a winner.

"This is more than just a match between two nations. It's an experiment in how chess can be packaged for live audiences and mainstream sports fans," the organisers said.

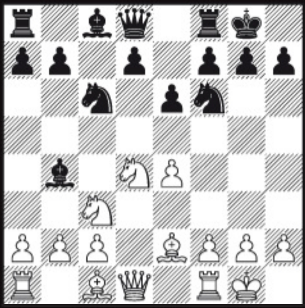
With the above statement, it was obvious from the start that the chess aspect of the match was the least important one. The big names like Gukesh, Nakamura, Caruana, Erigaisi, were brought in not so much to raise the level of the games, as much as to bring recognition among the masses. For the same reason, the chess celebrity category was there - Levy Rozman and Sagar Shah are by far the most famous YouTubers not only in the US and India, but also globally. The women and young players category were there for the variety - the general public is still curious how good women are at chess, while the wunderkinds are always attractive.

To confirm the point about the level of chess, here's how recent World Cup winner and over-2600 performer at the Open Grand Swiss, Divya Deshmukh, lost her game to Carissa Yip.

Carissa **Yip** - Divya **Deshmukh**

Checkmate USA vs India 2025 Arlington, US (1.1)

1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 e6 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♘f6 6.♗e2 ♗b4 7.0-0 0-0?!



If Black plays this line, she is obliged to take the pawn. After White's next move Black ends up in a prospectless position.

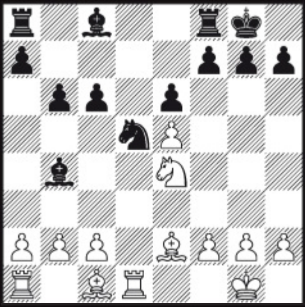
7...♗xc3 8.bxc3 ♘xe4 now White has compensation for the pawn, but Black has her chances, too. A few possible lines are 9.♗d3 (or *9.♘xc6 dxc6 10.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 11.♗f3 ♘f6* with a complex endgame.*)* 9...d5 10.♗a3 *(or 10.♘xc6 bxc6 11.♗a3 c5* where Black should be able to castle soon if White doesn't exchange the queens.*)* 10...♕a5 with a sharp position.

8.♘xc6! dxc6 8...bxc6 isn't better: 9.e5 ♘e8 10.♕d4 with (e4 to come, with a solid advantage for White.

9.e5 ♕xd1 Keeping the queens after 9...♘d5 10.♘e4 ♕c7 11.f4 increases the risk that Black ends up under attack after ♗d3, ♕g4(h5) etc.

10.♖xd1 ♘d5 11.♘e4 White has a clearly better endgame, as the hole on d6 and the badly placed black pieces make it very hard for Black to play.

11...b6?



This move is the losing mistake.

11...b5 was necessary to stop c4. 12.c3 ♗e7 13.a4 keeps White well on top, but at least Black is not immediately lost.

12.c4! ♘c7 13.♗g5 Black can hardly move. The threat is to play a3, when the bishop on c5 is short of squares as ...♗c5 can be met by b4.

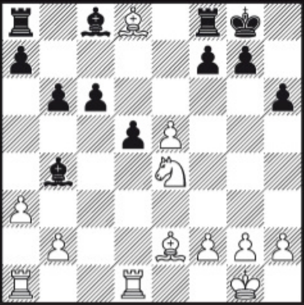
13...h6 14.♗d8! The knight is not much better than the exposed bishop on b4.

Like a wrestling superstar:
Fabiano Caruana arriving for the game against Erigaisi

14...♘d5 14...♘a6 15.a3 ♗c5 16.b4 traps the hapless bishop.

15.cxd5 exd5 15...♖xd8 16.dxc6 is equally hopeless.

16.a3!



The bishop is either lost or exchanged, ensuring White remains a piece up.

16...♖xd8 16...♗c5 17.♘xc5 bxc5 18.♗e7.

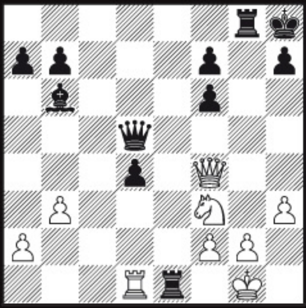
17.axb4 White is a piece up for a pawn and easily won the game. It’s hard to imagine such a level from a player on the rise like Divya, who in her recent events showed a level closer to 2600 than to the one displayed in this game.

1-0

An even more dramatic example is the following one. While they are not professional players, both Rozman and Shah are IMs, what happened is hard to comprehend, no matter how little time they may have had at this stage.

Levy **Rozman** – Sagar **Shah**

Checkmate USA vs India 2025 Arlington, US (1.2)



30.♖xe1 White recaptured the rook on e1.

30...d3?? Completely ignoring the threat. It’s worth noting that while the audience in the arena was allowed to cheer and shout, they were not allowed to shout out moves (though I wonder how they would have dealt with it if it happened).

30...♔g7 31.♘h4 d3 32.♘f5+ ♔h8 is unclear after 33.g4 when White has compensation for the pawn.; 30...f5 31.♖e5 ♕d6 32.♕xf5 ♕g6 forces the exchange of the queens, with an equal endgame.; 30...♕c6 simply defends the pawn on f6.

31.♖d1?? 31.♕xf6+, taking a pawn with a check is not a hard move to find. 31...♖g7 32.♖e8# and giving another check ("a patzer sees check, patzer gives check", to quote a great American, a certain Bobby Fischer) which shockingly happens to be a checkmate, would undoubtedly have warmed the hearts of the audience and the organisers.

31...♖d8?? Continuing to forget about the pawn on f6.

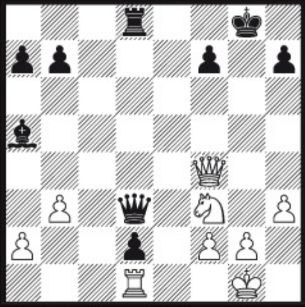
31...f5 was a sensible way to defend the pawn.

32.♕xf6+ Famous YouTubers may miss once, but they rarely miss twice!

© Ashwin Subramar

A blunderfest between IM YouTubers – Sagar Shah (India) and Levy Rozeman (USA)

32...♔g8 33.♖d2 ♗a5 34.♖d1 d2 35.♕f4 ♕d3??



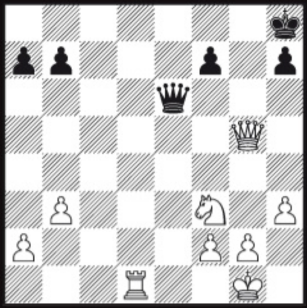
The blunderfest continues. This unfortunate move drops the bishop on a5.

35...♗c3 was a sensible move.

36.♕g5+ ♔h8 37.♕xa5 Now it's over and since the players were not allowed to resign games, Sagar finds an effective way to end the game quickly.

37...♕e2 A good move with the aforementioned idea in mind.

38.♕xd8+ ♔g7 39.♕xd2 ♕e6 40.♕g5+ ♔h8



With mate on the next 2 moves after ♖d8xe8. Likely Sagar lost on time as these moves were not executed.

1-0

It's worth quoting Rozman about the game: "The second game was exactly what we want to see, which is chaos, nonsense." (Quote taken from Peter Doggers's report on chess.com.)

This slowly leads us to the essence, why this event was organised and what its intention was.

"Inside the stadium, fans are even encouraged to cheer, clap, and react freely, with one exception: No shouting out moves!" (From Tarjei Svensen's report on chess.com.)

Under the influence of the most famous YouTubers, like Rozman and Nakamura, in the past period there has been a lot of talk to "bring chess to the masses" and make it a spectator sport (it's worth noting that this is self-serving, the more people follow chess, the more people will follow *them*, being the most popular personalities). The idea is far from new, but the new technologies and the success of the said YouTubers and chess.com have led many to believe that this is now finally possible.

The events like the Speed Chess Championship Finals, the Las Vegas Freestyle tournament, the Esports World Cup have largely been hailed as major successes, though with no big sponsors or TV deals, the organisers said they don't expect to make a profit, and ticket sales and early investors are what make the event possible: "Staging a six-hour stadium-scale production with superstar players is both a bold vision and a costly exercise," said Salim Belcadi, one of the organisers."

It's clear that these events are seen more as investments than an attempt to cash in immediately, but as always with investments, they would better start bringing in returns, or they will be abandoned.

© Ashwin Subramanian

Chess.com CEO, Danny Resch (far left)

So, the bet is on a lot of people being *entertained* by these types of spectacles. They don't need to understand chess (commentary was provided, but how much did that help?); they just need to have fun and want to pay for it.

But here's the core problem: in this case, what makes chess different from the wrestling shows with Hulk Hogan? In both events, the audience cheers, something is happening on the stage, there is shouting everywhere, high-fiving, "in your face" celebration of victories.

"Players are also encouraged to celebrate victories, even smashing the opponent's king at the finish, in a deliberate break from chess's usual etiquette. "We want fans to feel the same energy and catharsis they'd expect at a major sports event," the organisers explained." (from Tarjei Svensen's report on chess.com).

All of the above is in stark contrast to what chess has represented over the ages. A game of skill, nobleness and respect. A game with educational value, with certain standards of behaviour, a game with the help of which Alekhine forged his character. A game that promotes logic, objective analysis, patience and emotional control, it sharpens intuition and improves decision-making, strengthens memory and discipline and teaches how to remain calm under pressure.

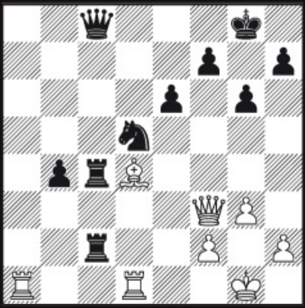
None of the above was present in the arena in Arlington. Does this mean that the game played in Texas was not the same one we've all grown used to?

The culmination of the whole event was the last game, played between Nakamura and Gukesh. After a series of draws, they came down to bullet games, one minute for the whole game.

Sharp moves: Hikaru Nakamura vs Gukesh D

Hikaru **Nakamura** - **Gukesh** D

Checkmate USA vs India 2025 Arlington, US (1.3)



44.♗e5 Black is completely winning, but playing on seconds White can hope to create something on the dark squares around the black king.

44...h5? The first big mistake, allowing exactly what he likely feared.

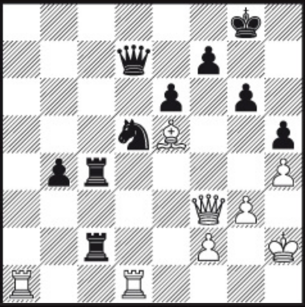
44...♖c1 was simplest, exchanging more pieces, since there is no danger for the black king as long as the knight on d5 is alive.

45.h4? An automatic reply and missing a big chance.

45.♖xd5! eliminates the defender of the king as 45...exd5 46.♕f6 ♔f8 47.♖a7 would soon lead to mate.

45...♕d7 Black is back in the game now, again winning.

46.♔h2



Preparing the sacrifice on d5.

46.♖xd5? doesn't work as after 46...♕xd5 47.♕f6 ♖c1+ 48.♖xc1 ♖xc1+ 49.♔h2 ♖h1# White gets mated faster.

46...♔h7? Gukesh misses the threat.

46...♖c8 covering the back rank was necessary. Now 47.♖xd5? doesn't work in view of 47...♕xd5 48.♕f6 ♖xf2+! 49.♕xf2 ♕xe5.

47.♖xd5! The tricks always happen when there is no time on the clock.

47...exd5 48.♕f6 ♖xf2+ 49.♕xf2 White is winning now.

49...♕e6 50.♗f4? Removing the bishop from the long diagonal lets Black off the hook.

50.♖a7! was the fastest win.

50...b3 51.♖c1? Now Black has a chance to win again!

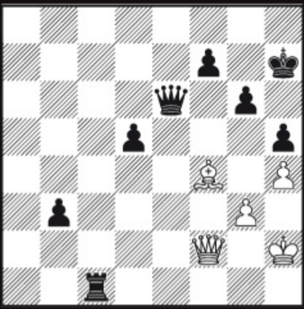
51.♖e1 ♖c2 52.♕xc2 bxc2 53.♖xe6 fxe6 is a drawn endgame;

8.0
TAG HEUER
CHECKMATE
USA vs INDIA

Nakamura throwing away Black's king after defeating the World Champion, Gukesh D

51.♗d2 was another option.

51...♖xc1?



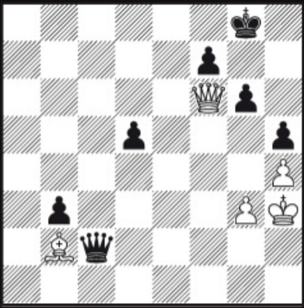
Captures are easy to make, but they are not always the best moves.

51...♖e4! with ...♖e2 next and Black wins. 52.♔g1 ♖e2 53.♕a7 b2 54.♖f1 ♖e1 and ...b1♕ comes next.

52.♗xc1 ♔g8 53.♗b2 The bishop returns to the long diagonal and the threats return with it.

53...♕e4 There was no need to let the white queen to f6, but this doesn't lose.

54.♕f6 ♕c2+ 55.♔h3



The women's duel: Yip vs Deshmukh

55...♔f8?? The final act of this tragi-comedy (or was it perhaps, farce?).

55...♕c8+ 56.♔g2 ♕c2+ would have been a perpetual check.

56.♕d8#

1-0

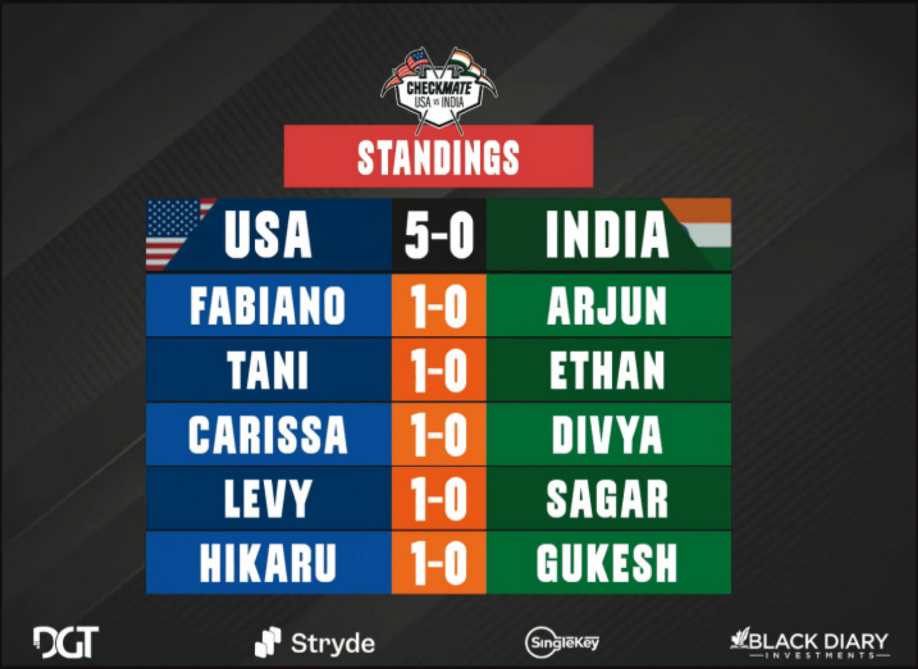
After delivering checkmate, Nakamura seized Gukesh's king and threw it into the audience, pulling faces and waving his hands wildly. An adequate finish of the event, Hulk Hogan would have loved it!

A question that ran through my mind was whether he would have done this had Kasparov been sitting across the board, in spite of all this being pre-planned and part of the show.

The throwing of the king was just the epitome of what the event symbolised - the complete opposite to what chess generally represents, and this, unsurprisingly, provoked contradictory reactions.

After seeing the clip of the king toss, I posted "Please don't throw chess pieces" on Twitter. It went viral, with over 321,000 views. The comments I received were polarised (as it befits the platform) - from absolute agreement and statements that chess should remain what it has been so far ("My daughter has seen it all, and today she has a chess class, God forbid she starts throwing the chess pieces.."), to horrendous insults ("shut up you massive nerd," "grumpy old man," "stfu," "oh shut up. What a stiff," "stop being such a boomer," and many others).

What was clear to me was that the insults were coming from people who don't really play or know much about chess, people who would have been equally


CHECKMATE
USA vs INDIA
DGT
Stryde
SingleKey
BLACK DIARY
INVESTMENTS

STANDINGS

USA	5-0	INDIA
FABIANO	1-0	ARJUN
TANI	1-0	ETHAN
CARISSA	1-0	DIVYA
LEVY	1-0	SAGAR
HIKARU	1-0	GUKESH

happy at any other entertainment show. For them, chess is the latest fad, and they are happy to “enjoy” it while it still feels novel, only to be abandoned once the novelty wears off.

And here comes the rub: with the “primitive” audience gone, where will that leave this “new” version of chess entertainment? The “old school” has no interest in these events, so who will watch them?

The core question about chess still remains unanswered: should chess be sold as pure entertainment? I think we will find the answer to that question soon enough - the investments in these types of events are on the rise and the market is always honest - if there is interest, there will be profits and the events will continue: in this case the answer is “yes.” Otherwise, we will be back to the “boring” Candidates and Grand Swisses.

It will be interesting to see what happens if the answer is “yes.” Will it bring more money to chess, will it open more opportunities to everybody, or will they be reserved for the select few who are on the top of the chess pyramid? Curious times lie ahead, but chess will survive any trend. Even if it turns into pure spectacle, those who truly care and look deeper will soon discover a vast world behind the glitter, rich with depth and beauty, a world best experienced in the quiet focus of study and the stillness of the playing hall.

CHESS SENSATION

BODHANA SIVANANDAN

I JUST TRY TO PLAY THE BOARD

BCM TALKS TO BODHANA AND HER PARENTS ABOUT CHESS, THE SACRIFICES IT REQUIRES AND THE REWARDS IT BRINGS

Scheinberg

BY MILAN DINIC
PHOTO: MIKHAL WALUSZA/RAFAL OLEKSIEWICZ – COURTESY OF FIDE.COM

The 10-year-old British sensation speaks about her chess path, love for Capablanca, and why she doesn't worry about who's sitting across from her.

It was Sunday afternoon at the European Club Cup in Rhodes when Bodhana Sivanandan did it again. The 10-year-old from Harrow – carrying a booster seat – caused another sensation, defeating the former Women's World Champion Mariya Muzychuk of Ukraine (rated 2485, a full 280 points more than Bodhana). The news was widely reported in the chess world, something which has not really been the case for British players in recent years. "She seems to be beating a GM every week now!" Grandmaster Danny Gormally remarked afterwards.

For Bodhana herself, the reaction was characteristically measured. For a 10-year-old, she is incredibly calm, composed and confident. When BCM spoke with her recently for this interview, I asked about moments like these – sitting across from someone much older, more experienced, decorated with titles. Her answer was simple: "I try to just play the board. It's not really a worry about who's on the other side playing against me." Maybe not surprisingly, Bodhana gave the same answer when asked about what is/was the hardest thing for her when playing.

That calm, almost zen-like approach runs through everything she says about chess. There's no false modesty, just a ten-year-old who discovered something she loved during the COVID lockdown and decided to see where it takes her.

THE CHESS SET FROM INDIA

Many great things in life started with an accident. Bodhana's story is no different. During COVID-19, when the world shut down and families were stuck at home thinking how to occupy restless children, Bodhana's father's friend had given the family several bags which included books, toys, and among them, a chess set.

"I was quite interested in the pieces in the chess set and I wanted to use them as toys," Bodhana recalls. "My dad told me that if I did, the next person who took the chess set wouldn't be able to play the game. So instead of using them as toys, I started playing chess."

That chess set still sits in the Sivanandan home in Harrow. It's where everything began – a gift that changed the trajectory of a family.

Bodhana's father, Sivanandan Velayutham, an IT professional originally from Tiruchirappalli in Tamil Nadu (the Indian chess powerhouse, where two world champions came from – Anand and Gukesh), taught her the basic moves. Then came Chess.com and YouTube videos. "Mostly general videos," Bodhana says when I ask about her early learning. No coaches, no formal training, just a curious mind and the computer.

Her mother, Lakshmi, remembers those early days during lockdown with a mixture of surprise and pride. "She was able to beautifully explain what they told in the video in her own words," Lakshmi tells me. "She understood the piece movements, and how the tactics work and everything. So we were quite surprised at that time." Still not thinking this would be very serious but realising it would be useful for

Bodhana, the family subscribed to Chess.com. Bodhana then started entering online competitions. She did well in her age category. The family decided to take it further.

MANCHESTER SQUARE GARDEN AND BEYOND

Her first over-the-board tournament came in July 2021 at Manchester Square Garden. Bodhana doesn't remember much about it but remembers what came next: December 2021, a tournament in Novi Sad, Serbia.

"I remember being the only player from England going, because that was during COVID," she says. It was her first international tournament. She played another tournament in Serbia after that, and she finished second in both events.

The progression from there has been nothing short of remarkable. Earlier this year at the British Chess Championships in Liverpool, Bodhana became the youngest female player ever to beat a grandmaster, defeating 60-year-old GM Peter Wells in the final round. At 10 years, five months and three days, she broke the record held by American Women's Champion Carissa Yip, set in 2019.

During that same tournament, she also secured her first WGM norm.

When I ask about the Wells game, Bodhana is characteristically analytical: "I think it was quite an equal game. He made a mistake and I was even. Then I got quite lucky to be able to win that one."

She might have been lucky, but fortune favours the brave and Bodhana has shown she fears no one over the board.

THE MIND OF A PRODIGY

When Bodhana talks about the game, there is no mysticism, no talk of chess as divine inspiration. Maybe she's too young for that... Her comments are all about work, focus, and enjoyment in equal measure.

When I ask what chess means to her personally, the answer is simple: "Determination."

I press her on this - what's the most important quality in chess? Patience? Calculation? Strategy? Courage?

"I think all the qualities are important and they all come into the game as well," she says. But if forced to choose one? "I think it's focus."

It's a remarkably mature answer from someone who has only been playing chess for four years. But when you talk to Bodhana and listen to her, the answer isn't surprising.

But between school, two younger twin sisters, violin lessons, piano practice - how does a 10-year-old maintain the concentration required to play at this level?

"I do chess, but sometimes I take breaks as well, like playing with my sisters or listening to music." She plays both violin and piano, though when I ask which matters more to her, chess wins easily.

Her routine during term time is disciplined: she studies chess for two hours daily. During holidays and weekends, it's more. But there's never a sense that she's forced to do it. This is a child who has found something she loves.

FIDE
Scheinberg
English Chess Fed

Bodhana interviewed by Jovi Houska and Daniel King during the World Rapid and Blitz Teams

CAPABLANCA AND THE POLGAR SISTERS

Every chess player has their heroes, and Bodhana is no exception. When I ask about her favourite players, the answer comes quickly: Jose Raul Capablanca.

Why Capablanca? "I like his games. They're quite interesting."

Something is fitting about that choice. Capablanca, famous for his natural understanding of the game, his clarity, and his ability to make the difficult look simple. Those qualities seem to resonate with Bodhana's own approach.

She's also drawn to Judit Polgar of course – the strongest female player of all time, and her sisters. Bodhana met Judit a few months before the Chess Olympiad in 2024, where Bodhana herself made history by becoming the youngest person ever to represent England internationally in any sport.

"It was quite nice meeting the strongest female player of all time," she says. Does meeting Judit inspire her? "I want to become as strong or maybe even stronger someday."

There's no hesitation in that answer. Just a straightforward statement.

THE COST OF TALENT

Behind every sports prodigy is a family making sacrifices. Bodhana's parents speak about this with honesty.

"For the last three years, we've never been to India," Bodhana's father Sivanandan tells me. His parents are still there, but taking Bodhana to tournaments is a priority.

There's a pause. "You can't get everything in life."

Sivanandan works in software. When he had a remote position, he could travel with Bodhana to tournaments. But he recently started a new role that requires him to be in the office. At the British Championships this summer, it was the mother, Lakshmi, who accompanied their daughter. It was her first time at a long tournament.

For Lakshmi, managing three daughters with only 18 months between them all while one is becoming a chess star has required its own kind of strategic thinking. "During the starting days, it used to be very difficult because it was all online," she says. "When she is playing, I'll make sure I engage the other two to quietly do something, just read books with them so that they don't make too much noise and distract her when she's playing chess."

But she's quick to note something else: "Now they understand that their sister is performing well, so they just occupy themselves."

The twins play chess too. Bodhana taught them the basics, though they've since learned more from apps and videos themselves.

When I ask Lakshmi about watching Bodhana's games – she laughs. "I can't understand it most of the time without the engine on, so I try to stay away if it's not a live board."

Not every chess parent needs to be a chess expert. Sometimes the best support is simply being there.

THE ENGLISH CHESS RENAISSANCE

Bodhana is part of something larger - a new generation of English chess talent that has people excited.

GM Danny Gormally explained for the ECF website: "English chess has been in the doldrums for so many years. We've had good players coming through, don't get me wrong, but we haven't had great players coming through for many years. And now we've suddenly got a generation with GM Shreyas Royal and Bodhana, and FM Supratit Banerjee and FM Ethan Pang and others who are actually exciting."

The English Chess Federation has provided crucial support through their accelerator programme. John Nunn and John Rosenthal have also stepped forward to help with tournament expenses. But Sivanandan makes a point that deserves attention: England needs to create better ecosystems for young chess talent – "educational opportunities, job prospects, sponsors who can support these children as they develop".

Still, the chess community itself has been welcoming. As an immigrant family, the Sivanandans have found something valuable in the chess world. "I see it as a very, very fantastic social setup," Sivanandan says. "Many people have come forward to help. They are very protective as well. They don't treat you as a third person or an immigrant. They always make you feel welcome."

I ask directly whether they've experienced any animosity or problems as migrants in the UK chess scene. The answer is unequivocal: "No, never. It's always a

competition, there is healthy competition, but otherwise it's always a good environment."

THE DREAM

I ask Bodhana if she's ever felt overwhelmed by the attention she's receiving - the media coverage, the recognition, becoming a chess celebrity.

"I try to just focus on chess and keep improving instead of worrying about everyone else."

What about when she was younger - did people dismiss her as just a young girl they could beat easily?

"I might have felt that when I was quite a few years younger, but nowadays I don't really mind it either."

So what's the goal? What does Bodhana want to achieve in chess?

"I want to become the youngest female Grandmaster of all time, and also the youngest GM overall."

When? "As soon as possible."

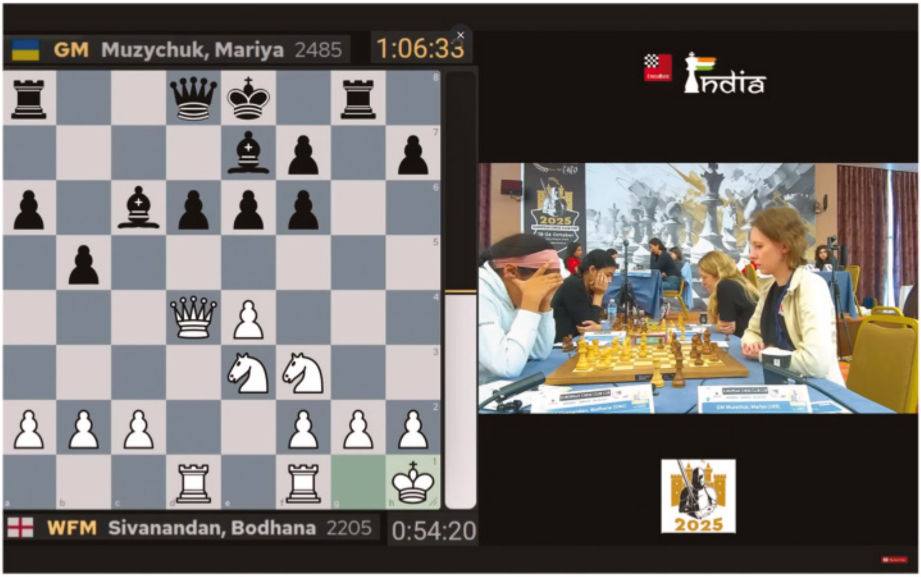
I ask her to put a timeframe on it. Five years? Ten years?

"I don't know. I don't really know when. I'm just trying to do it as soon as I can… I can try for it, but anything can happen as well."

That's the thing about Bodhana – she's ambitious without being arrogant, confident without being cocky. We can all learn a lot from that.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG PLAYERS AND PARENTS

Before we finish, I ask what advice she'd give to parents trying to get their



A spectacular victory for Bodhana against the former World Champion, Mariya Muzychuk

children into chess. What should they definitely do?

"They should tell them to keep going, no matter what happens, and not after one loss just stop completely."

And what should they avoid?

"If you play chess, you kind of have to like it and enjoy it as well. So if you like it, then it's a good thing to do as a hobby or maybe even as a sport. But otherwise, you can do something else as well."

Lakshmi adds her own perspective as a mother: "The parents should be ready to make huge sacrifices. The amount of time and expense we put into chess is huge. They should encourage the kid, and if you don't know chess, don't talk chess to them - just let the coach do the talking. Just let the child enjoy it and focus on the process rather than just focusing on the result."

EPILOGUE

As I finish speaking with the Sivanandan family, I'm struck by something. We spend so much time in chess writing about prodigies, about the next great talent, the rating points, tournament performances, world rankings.

But what makes Bodhana different isn't just the impressive results. It's the clarity. The focus and the calm around her.

"I just try to play the board."

Six words that sum up everything.

The chess world will be watching.

EUROPEAN SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

By IM Shaun Taulbut

The 2025 European Senior Chess Championship took place in the coastal resort of Rabac, Croatia, from 27 September to 5 October, bringing together more than 160 players from 30 European federations.

Organised by the European Chess Union and the Croatian Chess Federation, the event featured four sections: Open 50+, Open 65+, Women 50+, and Women 65+, each played over nine rounds (seven in the Women 65+ category) with a classical time control.

This year's champions included GM Jean-Marc Degraeve of France in the Open 50+ section and Georgia's GM Zurab Sturua, who edged out GM John Nunn on tiebreaks to claim the Open 65+ title. Among the women, WIM Gundula Heinatz of Switzerland triumphed in the 50+ category after a tense final round, while Romania's WIM Ligia-Letitia Jicman topped the 65+ standings.

With strong fields, multiple former national champions, and a total prize fund of 8,000 euros, the Rabac edition of the championship once again highlighted the enduring strength, fighting spirit, and depth of Europe's senior chess scene.

In the over 65s, John Nunn finished equal first with 7/9 but Zurab Sturua won the title on tie breaks. John Pigott was third equal with 6.5/9 and Andrew Smith scored 6/9. In the Women's over 50, Petra Fink-Nunn was third with 6/9.

Here we will look at a game by John Nunn which was a very good illustration of play down an open file and the battle around entry squares.

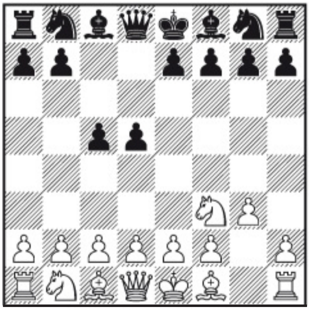
Peter **Petran** - John **Nunn**

23rd ch-Euro Seniors +65 Rabac CRO (5.4)

1.g3 d5 Black has several choices here eg 1...e5 2.c4 ♘c6 3.♗g2 ♗c5 transposing to an English Opening.

2.♘f3 Possible is 2.d4 c5 3.dxc5 e6 with equality.

2...c5



Black plays actively as White has not yet moved a centre pawn controlling d4 and preparing …♘c6.

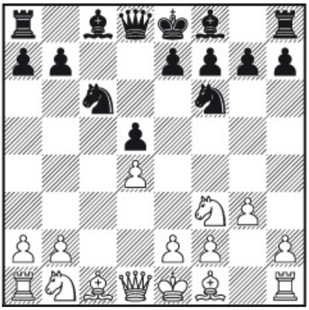
3.c3 White opts for a symmetrical pawn structure but this is perhaps too passive.

The alternatives were:

1) 3.c4 dxc4 4.♕a4+ ♘c6 5.♘c3 ♗d7 6.♕xc4 e5 when Black has equality;

2) 3.d3 ♘c6 4.♗g2 e5 leads to a reversed Kings Indian and maybe best here.

3...♘f6 4.d4 cxd4 5.cxd4 ♘c6



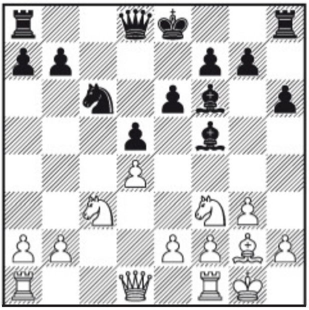
Black has equality as White does not have an advantage in development. There is one open file; the c-file.

6.♗g2 ♗f5 The bishop is outside the pawn chain and well placed here.

7.0-0 If 7.♕b3 ♕d7 8.♘e5 ♘xe5 9.dxe5 ♘e4 is satisfactory for Black.

7...e6 8.♘c3 ♗e7 9.♗g5 Better is 9.♘h4 ♗g6 10.♘xg6 hxg6 11.♕d3 ♕b6 12.♖d1 ♖c8 is equal or 9.♕b3 ♕b6 10.♕xb6 axb6 11.♗f4 ♘e4 with equality.

9...h6 10.♗xf6 ♗xf6

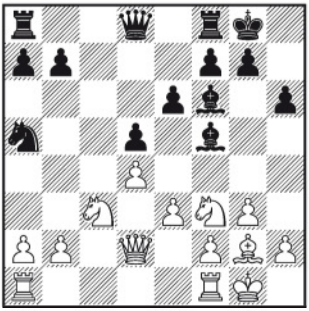


Black has the bishop pair, a long-term advantage and an easier game now.

11.e3 0-0 12.♕d2 12.♕e2 ♖c8 with a slight edge for Black was the alternative.

12...♘a5

Source: European Chess Union



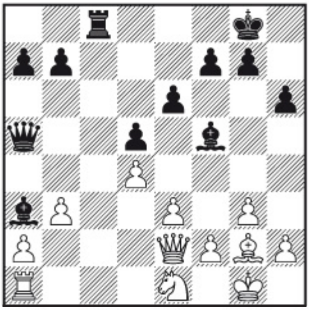
13.♖fc1 Perhaps better was keeping the knight out of c4 with 13.b3 ♖c8 14.♖fc1 ♗e7 or 13.♘e5 ♗xe5 14.dxe5 ♕b6.

13...♘c4 14.♕e2 ♖c8 15.b3 15...♘a3 The knight is safe here and controls c2 and b1, making an invasion by the black pieces more likely along the c-file.

16.♘e1 White aims to protect c2; the alternative was 16.♕b2 ♕a5 17.b4 ♘c4 18.bxa5 ♘xb2 19.♘b5 ♘c4 20.♘xa7 ♖a8 21.♘b5 ♖xa5 with an edge for Black.

16...♗e7 17.♘b5 ♕a5 18.♘xa3 ♗xa3 Black takes control of the c-file.

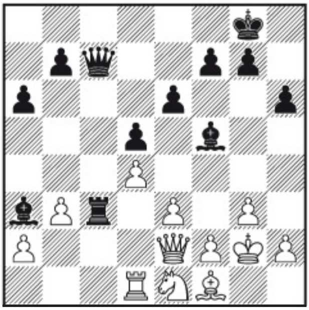
19.♖xc8 ♖xc8



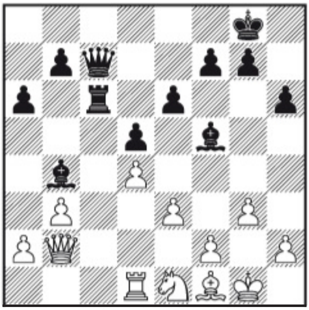
Black has a big edge because of his control of the open c-file and White can only defend the entry squares.

20.♗f1 More combative is 20.e4 dxe4 21.♗xe4 ♗xe4 22.♕xe4 ♖c7 when Black has the edge.

20...a6 21.♖d1 ♖c3 22.♔g2 ♕c7



23.♔g1 ♗b4 24.♕b2 ♖c6



Black plans to exchange off the White knight and invade on c2.

25.a3 After 25.♘d3 ♖c2 26.♕b1 ♗a3 27.b4 b5 28.♕b3 ♖c3 29.♕b1 ♕c4.

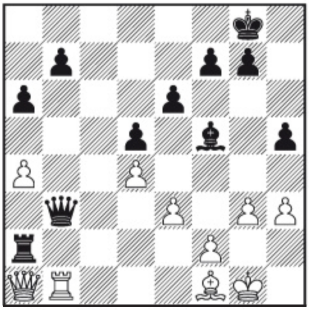
25...♗xe1 26.♖xe1 ♖c2 Black invades the White position.

27.♕a1 ♕c3 Black offers the exchange of queens as White cannot defend the queenside pawns because of the black bishop on f5.

28.h3 After 28.♕xc3 ♖xc3 wins a pawn.

28...h5 Preventing White from playing g4.

29.a4 ♕xb3 30.♖b1 ♖a2 Forcing an exchange of queens when White has to defend his kingside.



31.♖xb3 ♖xa1 32.♔g2 ♗e4+ 33.f3 ♖a2+ 34.♔g1 ♗xf3 35.♖xb7 ♖xa4 36.♗d3 ♗e4 Black is two pawns up so White resigned; Black can advance on the kingside or play to exchange the a-pawn for another White kingside pawn.

0-1

3RD CH-EURO SENIORS +50 RABAC CRO SAT 27TH SEP 2025 - SUN 5TH OCT 2025
LEADING FINAL ROUND 9 STANDINGS:

Rk	SNo	Name	FED	Rtg	Pts	TB1	TB2	TB3
1	1	GM **Degraeve, Jean-Marc**	FRA	2478	7	0	46.5	50.5
2	10	IM **Lacasa Diaz, Josep Anton**	ESP	2301	6..5	0	48	52
3	3	GM **Holzke, Frank**	GER	2409	6..5	0	44	48.5
4	6	GM **Thorhallsson, Throstur**	ISL	2391	6..5	0	43.5	47
5	8	IM **Van Der Werf, Mark**	NED	2390	6	0	47.5	51.5
6	9	GM **Fercec, Nenad**	CRO	2362	6	0	44	48
7	12	FM **Motuz, Karol**	SVK	2252	6	0	44	47.5
8	19	IM **Stets, Vasyl**	UKR	2140	6	0	43	47
9	4	IM **Bellia, Fabrizio**	ITA	2397	6	0	42.5	46.5
10	2	GM **Oms Pallisse, Josep**	ESP	2437	6	0	42	46
11	5	GM **Mrva, Martin**	SVK	2394	6	0	41	45
12	17	FM **Cmiel, Thorsten**	GER	2167	5.	0	44	47.5
13	37	CM **Menac Comas, Joan Ramon**	ESP	2011	5.5	0	37	39.5
14	7	IM **Sielecki, Christof**	GER	2390	5	0	47	51
15	14	FM **Dishman, Stephen**	ENG	2211	5	0	44	48
16	11	IM **Vinter-Schou, Uffe**	DEN	2291	5	0	40	43.2
17	21	**Farrell, Neil**	SCO	2129	5	0	40	43.5
18	15	FM **Kniest, Oliver**	GER	2184	5	0	38.5	42
19	30	**Burrows, Martin P**	ENG	2088	5	0	36.5	40

CH-EURO SENIORS WOMEN +50 RABAC CRO SAT 27TH SEP 2025 - SUN 5TH OCT 2025
LEADING FINAL ROUND 9 STANDINGS:

Rk	SNo	Name	FED	Rtg	Pts	TB1	TB2	TB3
1	2	WIM **Heinatz, Gundula**	SUI	2056	7	0	42	545.5
2	3	WFM **Brokko, Margit**	EST	1985	7	0	42	43.5
3	4	WFM **Fink-Nunn, Petra**	ENG	1983	6	0	46.5	50
4	6	WFM **Birkholz, Olga**	GER	1949	5.5	0	43.5	45
5	8	**Ni, Polina**	LAT	1867	5.5	0	42.5	44
6	1	WIM **Krasenkowa, Elena**	POL	2100	5	1	44.5	46
7	7	**Sirletti, Sonia**	ITA	1894	5	2	43	44.5
8	5	WIM **Leszner, Liliana**	POL	1981	4.5	0	42	43.5
9	10	**Novak, Simona**	SLO	1788	3.5	1	36	39.5
10	9	**Kordic, Sanja**	CRO	1808	3.5	2	42	43.5
11	11	**Balcerczak, Ewa**	POL	1572	1.5	0	39.5	41

23RD CH-EURO SENIORS +65 RABAC CRO SAT 27TH SEP 2025 - SUN 5TH OCT 2025
LEADING FINAL ROUND 9 STANDINGS:

Rk	SNo	Name	FED	Rtg	Pts	TB1	TB2	TB3
1	2	GM **Sturua, Zurab**	GEO	2491	7	0	46.5	50.5
2	1	GM **Nunn, John D M**	ENG	2521	7	0	44	48.5
3	3	GM **Ftacnik, Lubomir**	SVK	2431	6.5	0	42.5	47
4	9	IM **Pigott, John C**	ENG	223	6.5	0	41.5	45
5	16	**Boulard, Eric**	FRA	2192	6	0	47.5	52
6	6	IM **Bilobrk, Franjo**	CRO	2329	6	0	47.5	51.5
7	14	IM **Welling, Gerard**	NED	2206	6	0	45	48.5
8	4	GM **Knaak, Rainer**	GER	2429	6	0	44.5	48.5
9	23	**Wahlbom, Magnus**	SWE	2140	6	0	44.5	48.5
10	21	IM **Pomes Marcet, Joan**	ESP	2159	6	0	44	47.5
11	12	FM **Werner, Clemens**	GER	2228	6	0	43	47.5
12	13	FM **Thorsteinsson, Thorsteinn**	ISL	2209	6	0	43	47
13	7	IM **Renman, Nils-Gustaf**	SWE	2308	6	0	41.5	44.5
14	32	FM **Smith, Andrew Philip**	IRL	2101	6	0	41.5	43
15	11	IM **Huss, Andreas**	SUI	2235	6	0	40.5	44.5
16	24	**Stoinev, Metodi**	BUL	2137	5.5	0	45	48
17	20	IM **Petran, Peter**	SVK	2166	5.5	0	44	47.5
18	10	FM **Chapman, Terry P D**	ENG	2257	5.5	0	43.5	47
19	37	FM **Fayard, Alain**	FRA	2079	5.5	0	43.5	46
20	5	GM **Petursson, Margeir**	ISL	2405	5.5	0	41	44.5
21	19	FM **Goormachtigh, Johan**	BEL	2173	5.5	0	40	43
22	18	**Townsend, M Paul**	ENG	2180	5.5	0	39.5	43.5

EUROPEAN SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIP • PRVENSTVO EUROPE ZA SENIORE •

2025 Rabac, Croatia
26.09. - 06.10. 2025

DANIEL NARODITSKY

(1995 – 2025)

Source: FIDE

Born on 9 November 1995 in San Mateo, California, Daniel Naroditsky went on to become a prominent Grandmaster, author, coach and streamer. He died just two weeks away from turning 30.

Chess entered his life at the age of six, when his older brother, Alan, brought several board games to entertain children at a party. Their father, Vladimir, an immigrant from Ukraine, taught the boys chess. “I think a lot of people want to imagine that it was love at first sight and that my brother couldn’t pull me away from the chessboard… It was more of a gradual process, where chess slowly entered the battery of stuff we did to pass the time. A lot of my best memories are just doing stuff with my brother,” he told the New York Times in 2022, in an article announcing that he will be writing a chess column for the paper. In fact, apart from chess, basketball was one of Naroditsky’s favourite sports.

Like most players destined for success, Daniel Naroditsky started making his mark early. In 2007, he won the title of FIDE Master and came first in the U-12 section of the World Youth Chess Championship. He shared second place at the 2010 US Open. In 2011 Naroditsky became an International Master. He took clear first at the 2013 Junior Championships. That same year, he won the title of Grandmaster. His peak FIDE rating in classical chess was 2647, which he achieved in May 2017. He was an exceptional Blitz and Rapid player. Naroditsky took part in major national and international events, while at the same time making a path for himself outside of chess, graduating with a degree in history from Stanford.

But Naroditsky’s biggest gift to chess was his ability to explain the game to those who were just starting to discover Caisa’s world. He was a teacher at the Charlotte Chess Centre, and also had private students. He authored several books on chess, starting with *Mastering Positional Chess* which he published at the age of 14 - having begun writing it when he was just ten years old.

Naroditsky often appeared as a commentator for prominent chess events, most notably on Chess.com, and also ran highly popular Twitch and YouTube channels, where he was praised for the ability to calmly and simply explain the game to players of all levels. He wrote a column for Chess Life from 2014 to 2020.

Naroditsky’s unexpected passing was announced on X by his family via the Charlotte Chess Centre. Chess players around the world spoke out following the news of Naroditsky’s death, praising him as a player, educator and a generous spirit.

Beyond the chessboard, Naroditsky played a pivotal role in popularising chess content online, bridging the gap between professional and amateur chess.

Speaking to the New York Times in 2022, he summed up his view of chess - and life - in the following well-known quote: “At the end of the game, both the king and the pawn go into the same box.”

There are not many people in the world who manage to achieve so much before they turn 30. Grandmaster Daniel Naroditsky will forever be among them.

Milan Dinic

MANCHESTER
CHESS FEDERATION

HARRY LAMB MEMORIAL 2025, BOLTON

By IM Shaun Taulbut

This tournament ended in a four way tie for first place with Keith Arkell, Danny Gormally, Mike Surtees and Adam Ashton all scoring 4/5.

Here we look at two instructing games, starting with Danny Gormally against Mike Surtees.

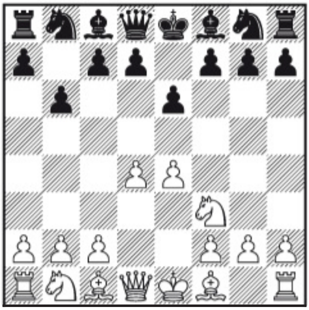
Danny **Gormally** - Mike **Surtees**

Harry Lamb Mem 2025 Bolton ENG (4.1)

1.d4 b6 The Queens Fianchetto, often transposing to Owen's defence which starts with 1 e4 b6.

2.e4 e6 More active is 2...♗b7 3.♗d3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 *(Not 4.e5 ♗xg2 5.exf6 ♗xh1 6.fxg7 ♗xg7 7.♕g4 ♗f6 8.f3 h5 9♕h3 e6 10.♘e2 ♗h4+ 11.♔d1 ♖g8* with a decisive advantage to Black*)* 4...♘c6 5.♘f3 ♘b4 6.e5 ♘xd3+ 7.♕xd3 ♘d5 8.♘xd5 ♗xd5 9.c4 ♗b7 10.0-0 with a slight edge for White.

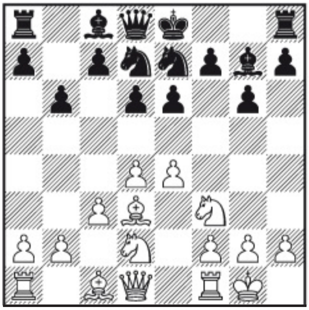
3.♘f3



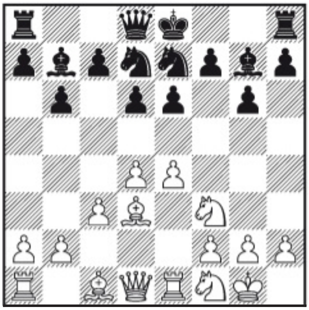
3...d6 The alternative is 3...♗b7 4.♗d3 c5 5.c3 ♘f6 with reasonable play for Black.

4.♗d3 g6 The double Fianchetto is provocative but difficult to break down, White chooses to develop quietly.

5.0-0 ♗g7 6.c3 ♘d7 7.♘bd2 ♘e7

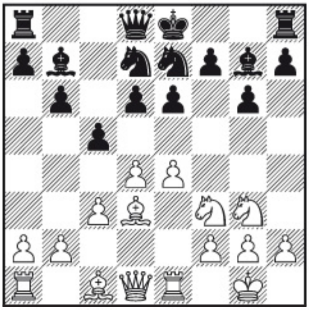


8.♖e1 ♗b7 9.♘f1



9...c5 Black decides to play in the centre; 9...0-0 is a good alternative, removing the king to safety.

10.♘g3

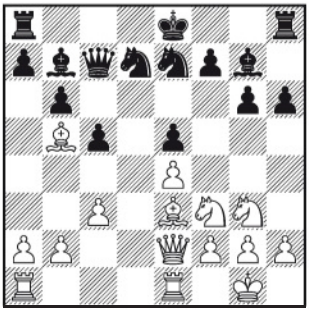


10...h6 Again 10...0-0 11.♗g5 h6 is a good alternative.

11.♗e3 ♕c7 After 11...0-0 12.♕d2 ♔h7 13.♖ac1 White is slightly better.

12.♕e2 e5 This is not the safest 12...0-0 was worth consideration.

13.dxe5 dxe5 14.♗b5



White has a lead in development and can start some active play now using the open d-file.

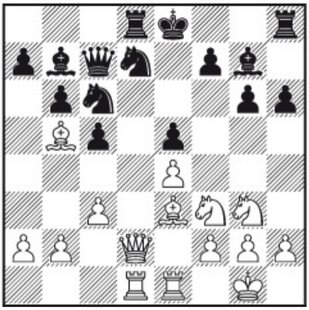
14...♘c6 14...a6 15.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 16.b4 cxb4 17.cxb4 ♕e6 18.♖ec1 with a slight edge for White; 14...♖d8 15.♖ad1 0-0 is best.

15.♖ad1 White now has pressure down the d-file and Black still has not decided where to place his king.

15...♖d8 16.♘h4 16.h4 0-0 17.h5 is a strong alternative softening up the Black kingside, eg 17...♘f6 18.♘h4 g5 19.♘hf5 with an edge for White.

16...♗f6 17.♘f3 White can play the forcing 17.♘hf5 gxf5 18.♘xf5 ♘f8 19.♗xh6 ♘g6 20.♕g4 with compensation for the sacrificed piece but decides to continue positionally probing for weaknesses.

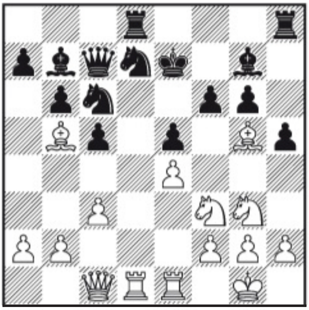
17...♗g7 18.♕d2



White doubles on the pawn on h6, which prevents Black castling and now Black is in some difficulties.

18...♔e7 Now the black king is stuck in the centre. After 18...♘f6 19.♗xc6+ ♗xc6 20.♕xd8+ ♕xd8 21.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 22.♘xe5 with a clear pawn ahead or 18...♘f8 19.♕c1 ♖xd1 20.♖xd1 ♘e6 21.♗c4 0-0 22.♗xe6 fxe6 23.♗xh6 is much better for White.

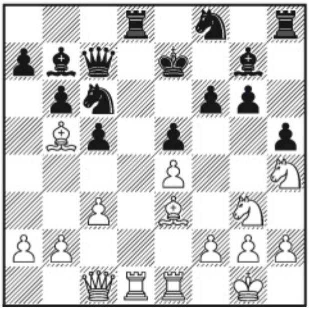
19.♕c1 h5 20.♗g5+ f6



Now White is can further probe the Black position by attacking g6.

21.♘h4 ♘f8 If Black captures the piece with 21...fxg5 22.♕xg5+ ♗f6 23.♘xg6+ ♔e8 24.♕f5 White is winning eg 24...♖g8 *(24...♖h6 25.♘xh5 ♖xh5 26.♕xh5)* 25.♕e6+.

22.♗e3

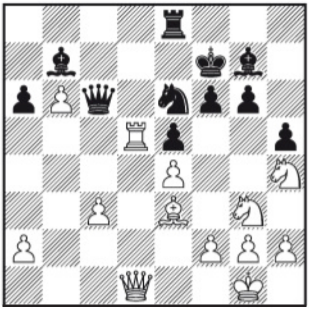


22...♖d7 23.b4 a6 After 23...cxb4 24.cxb4 ♘xb4 25.♗xd7 ♕xc1 26.♗xc1 ♘xd7 27.♗a3 a5 28.♘xg6+ ♔d8 29.♘xh8 ♗xh8 30.♗xb4 axb4 31.♘xh5 White is winning.

24.♗xc6 ♕xc6 25.bxc5

25...♔f7 After 25...bxc5 26.♖xd7+ ♕xd7 *(26...♘xd7 27.♘xg6+; 26...♔xd7 27.♕a3 c4 28.♖b1* with the threat of Rb6 is winning) 27.♗xc5+ wins the pawn.

26.cxb6 ♘e6 27.♖xd7+ ♕xd7 28.♖d1 ♕c6 29.♖d5 ♖e8 30.♕d1



30...♗f8 If 30...♕xc3 31.♖d7+ ♖e7 32.♘xg6 is winning.

31.♘xg6 ♔xg6 32.♕xh5+ ♔g7 33.♘f5+ ♔g8 34.♕g6+ ♗g7 34...♔h8 35.♕xf6+ ♔g8 36.♘h6+ ♗xh6 37.♗xh6 ♕xc3 *(37...♔h7 38.♖xe5 ♕d7 39.h4 ♕e7 40.♖xe6 ♕xf6 41.♖xf6 ♖xe4 42.♗g5* is winning) 38.♕g6+.

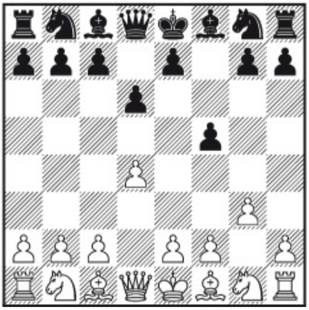
35.♘xg7 ♘xg7 36.♗h6 Black has no defence as moving the rook to defend g7 allows ♖d8+ winning

1-0

Keith **Arkell** – Rudy **Van Kemenade**

Harry Lamb Mem 2025 Bolton ENG (2.2)

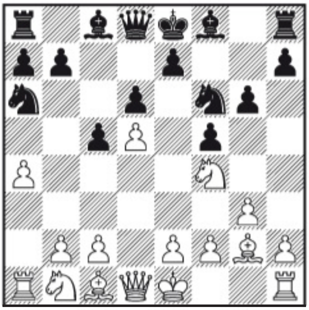
1.d4 d6 2.g3 f5



3.d5 c5 4.a4 ♘f6 4...e5 is a good alternative.

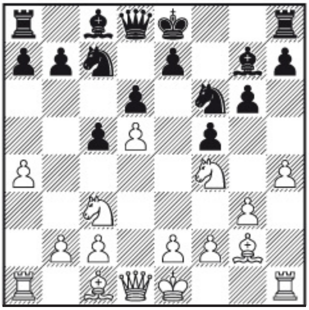
5.♘h3 ♘a6 Worth consideration is 5...e6 6.dxe6 ♗xe6 7.♘c3 ♘c6 8.♗g2 ♗e7.

6.♗g2 g6 7.♘f4



White concentrates his forces on the e6 square.

7...♘c7 8.♘c3 ♗g7 9.h4

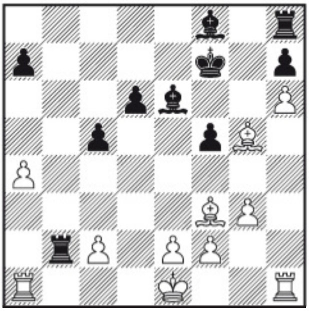


Black decides to advance to break the strangle hold on e6.

9...e5 10.dxe6 ♕e7 11.h5 Tempting but best was 11.♘b5 ♘xb5 12.axb5 0-0 13.♕d3 with advantage to White.

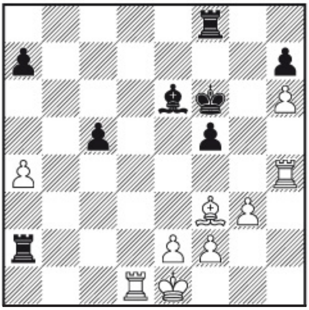
11...g5 12.h6 ♗f8 After 12...gxf4 13.hxg7 ♕xg7 14.♗xf4 with a decisive advantage for White.

13.♘fd5 ♘fxd5 14.♘xd5 ♘xd5 15.♕xd5 ♗xe6 16.♕xb7 ♕xb7 17.♗xb7 ♖b8 18.♗c6+ ♔f7 19.♗xg5 ♖xb2 20.♗f3



Maybe better was 20.♔d2 ♗e7 21.♗f4 with an edge for White.

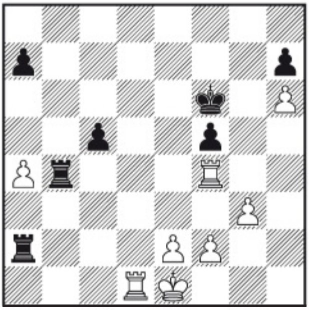
20...♔g6 21.♗f4 ♖xc2 22.♖d1 ♖a2 23.♗xd6 ♔f6 24.♗xf8 ♖xf8 25.♖h4



White has the better pawn structure but Black has counterplay on the queenside.

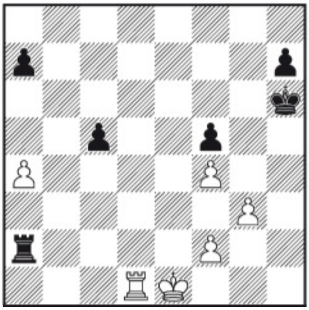
25...♖b8 26.♗d5 ♗xd5 27.♖xd5 ♖b1+ 28.♖d1 ♖b4 Best was 28...♖xd1+ 29.♔xd1 ♖a1+ 30.♔c2 ♖a2+ 31.♔d3 ♖a3+ and it is difficult for White to avoid a draw.

29.♖f4



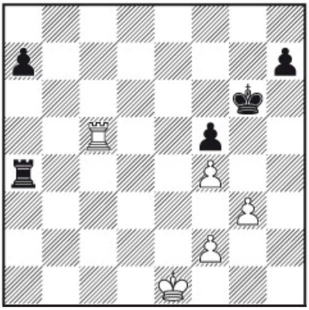
29...♔g5 Possible is 29...♖axa4 30.♖d6+ ♔g5 31.e3.

30.e3 ♖xf4 31.exf4+ ♔xh6



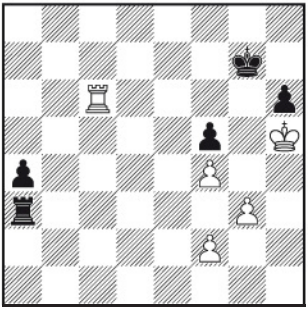
White still has winning chances with his compact pawn structure whereas the Black pawns are all isolated.

32.♖d5 ♔g6 33.♖xc5 ♖xa4



Material is equal but White can still try to win.

34.♔f1 a5 35.♖c6+ ♔g7 36.♖c2 ♔g6 37.♔g2 ♖a3 38.♔h3 a4 39.♔h4 h6 40.♖c6+ ♔g7 41.♔h5



41...♖a1 42.♖g6+ ♔f7 43.♔xh6 ♖f1 The losing mistake; best is 43...♖e1 when 44.♖a6 is losing *(44.♖g7+ ♔f6 45.♖g6+ ♔f7 46.♖g7+ ♔f6 with a draw Not 47.♖a7 ♖h1#) after* 44...♖e6+ 45.♖xe6 ♔xe6.

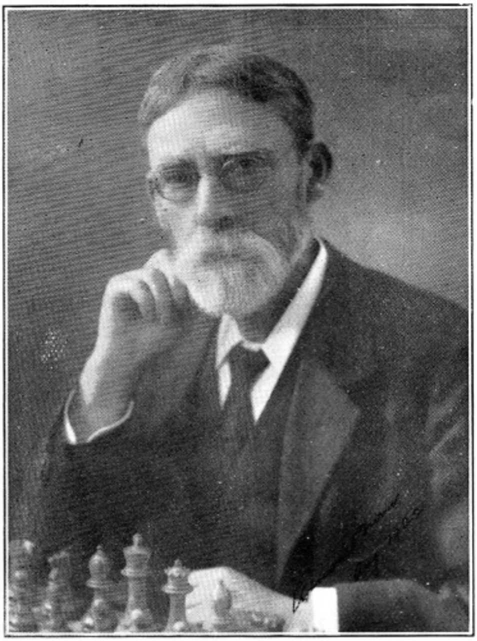
44.♔g5 ♖xf2 45.♖f6+ ♔g7 46.♖xf5 a3 47.♖a5 a2 48.f5 ♔f7 49.♖a7+

1-0

HARRY LAMB MEM 2025 BOLTON ENG FRI 15TH AUG 2025 - SUN 17TH AUG 2025
LEADING FINAL ROUND 5 STANDINGS:

Rk	SNo	Name	FED	Rtg	Pts	TB1
1	2	**Arkell, Keith C**	ENG	2363	4	16.5
2	1	**Gormally, Daniel W**	ENG	2413	4	15.5
3	6	**Surtees, Mike J**	ENG	2055	4	13.5
4	3	**Ashton, Adam G**	ENG	2274	4	13
5	4	**Jackson, Edward**	ENG	2194	3.5	13.5
6	9	**Vaddhireddy, Sai**	ENG	1972	3	17.5
7	14	**Van Kemenade, Rudy**	ENG	1926	3	15.5
8	16	**Rughani, Mahin**	ENG	1906	3	15.5
9	10	**Joseph, Patrick**	ENG	1959	3	14.5
10	34	**Cameron, Josh**	ENG	1810	3	14
11	17	**Kearney, James**	ENG	1902	3	13.5
12	8	**Zhu, Yaoyao**	ENG	1991	3	12
13	11	**Hepworth, Peter**	ENG	1948	3	12.5
14	22	**Ashton, Alannah**	ENG	1867	3	12.5
15	29	**Barnes, Jamie**	ENG	1952	3	12
16	25	**Van Kemenade, Julie**	ENG	1743	3	9.5

REPRINT: How BCM marked the death of a great English and world chess player



ONE HUNDRED YEARS SINCE THE PASSING OF AMOS BURN

In this reprint from the January 2026 issue of the British Chess Magazine, we revisit the life and legacy of Amos Burn – one of England's greatest masters of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, known for his defencive skills and resolute playing style. A pupil of Steinitz and a gentleman of the game, Burn combined business acumen with a lifelong devotion to chess as player, editor, and writer. Following the 1906 tournament in Ostend, his great rival at the time, Isidor Gunsberg, wrote the following lines: "Burn was the wonder and admiration of all his fellow competitors. He did great credit to English chess and was generally known as the Invincible English Bulldog."

The original obituary, written by John Herbert Blake, is left as published 100 years ago, without any interventions. (Note: Blake died in 1919, but it is likely that in 1926 BCM adapted a pre-preapared article on Burn by Blake, and published it.)

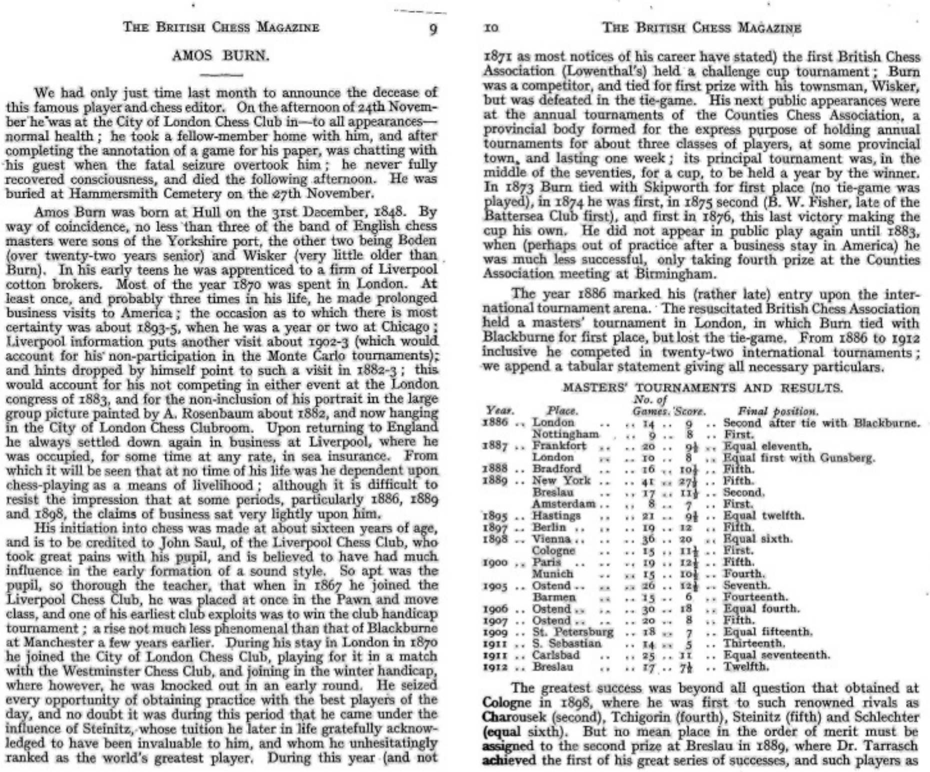
Our thanks go to Pete Tamburro for bringing this gem from the archives to light and for providing two wonderfully annotated games that capture the imagination and quiet brilliance of Burn's play.

Milan Dinic, Editor

We had only just time last month to announce the decease of this famous player and chess editor. On the afternoon of 24th November he was at the City of London Chess Club in—to all appearances—normal health; he took a fellow-member home with him, and after completing the annotation of a game for his paper, was chatting with his guest when the fatal seizure overtook him; he never fully recovered consciousness, and died the following afternoon. He was buried at Hammersmith Cemetery on the 27th November.

Amos Burn was born at Hull on the 31st December, 1848. By way of coincidence, no less than three of the band of English chess masters were sons of the Yorkshire port, the other two being Boden (over twenty-two years senior) and Wisker (very little older than Burn). In his early teens he was apprenticed to a firm of Liverpool cotton brokers. Most of the year 1870 was spent in London. At least once, and probably three times in his life, he made prolonged business visits to America; the occasion as to which there is most certainty was about 1893-5, when he was a year or two at Chicago; Liverpool information puts another visit about 1902-3 (which would account for his non-participation in the Monte Carlo tournaments); and hints dropped by himself point to such a visit in 1882-3; this would account for his not competing in either event at the London congress of 1883, and for the non-inclusion of his portrait in the large group picture painted by A. Rosenbaum about 1882, and now hanging in the City of London Chess Clubroom. Upon returning to England he always settled down again in business at Liverpool, where he was occupied, for some time at any rate, in sea insurance. From which it will be seen that at no time of his life was he dependent upon chess-playing as a means of livelihood; although it is difficult to resist the impression that at some periods, particularly 1886, 1889 and 1898, the claims of business sat very lightly upon him.

His initiation into chess was made at about sixteen years of age, and is to be credited to John Saul, of the Liverpool Chess Club, who took great pains with his pupil, and is believed to have had much influence in the early formation of a sound style. So apt was the pupil, so thorough the teacher, that when in 1867 he joined the Liverpool Chess Club, he was placed at once in the Pawn and move class, and one of his earliest club exploits was to win the club handicap tournament; a rise not much less phenomenal than that of Blackburne at Manchester a few years earlier. During his stay in London in 1870 he joined the City of London Chess Club, playing for it in a match with the Westminster Chess Club, and joining in the winter handicap, where however, he was knocked out in an early round. He seized every opportunity of obtaining practice with the best players of the day, and no doubt it was during this period that he came under the influence of Steinitz, whose tuition he later in life gratefully acknowledged to have been invaluable to him, and whom he unhesitatingly ranked as the world's greatest player. During this year (and not 1871 as most notices of his career have stated) the first British Chess Association (Lowenthal's) held a challenge cup tournament; Burn was a competitor, and tied for first prize with his townsman, Wisker, but was defeated in the tie-game. His next public appearances were at the annual tournaments of the Counties Chess Association, a provincial body formed for the express purpose of holding annual tournaments for about three classes of players, at some provincial town, and lasting one week; its principal tournament was, in the middle of the seventies, for a cup, to be held a year by the winner. In 1873 Burn tied with Skipworth for first place (no tie-game was played), in 1874 he was first, in 1875 second (B. W. Fisher, late of the Battersea Club first), and first in 1876, this last victory making the cup his own. He did not appear in public play again until 1883, when (perhaps out of practice after a business stay in America) he was much less successful, only taking fourth prize at the Counties Association meeting at Birmingham.



THE BRITISH CHESS MAGAZINE 9

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10 THE BRITISH CHESS MAGAZINE

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The year 1886 marked his (rather late) entry upon the international tournament arena. The resuscitated British Chess Association held a masters' tournament in London, in which Burn tied with Blackburne for first place, but lost the tie-game. From 1886 to 1912 inclusive he competed in twenty-two international tournaments; we append a tabular statement giving all necessary particulars.

MASTERS' TOURNAMENTS AND RESULTS.

Year.	*Place.*	*No. of Games.*	*Score.*	*Final position.*
1886	London	14	9	Second after tie with Blackburne.
	Nottingham	9	8	First.
1887	Frankfort	20	9½	Equal eleventh.
	London	10	8	Equal first with Gunsberg.
1888	Bradford	16	10½	Fifth.
1889	New York	41	27½	Fifth.
	Breslau	17	11½	Second.
	Amsterdam	8	7	First.
1895	Hastings	21	9½	Equal twelfth.
1897	Berlin	19	12	Fifth.
1898	Vienna	36	20	Equal sixth.
	Cologne	15	11½	First.
1900	Paris	19	12½	Fifth.
	Munich	15	10½	Fourth.
1905	Ostend	26	12½	Seventh.
	Barmen	15	6	Fourteenth.
1906	Ostend	30	18	Equal fourth.
1907	Ostend	20	8	Fifth.
1909	St. Petersburg	18	7	Equal fifteenth.
1911	S. Sebastian	14	5	Thirteenth.
1911	Carlsbad	25	11	Equal seventeenth.
1912	Breslau	17	7½	Twelfth.

The greatest success was beyond all question that obtained at Cologne in 1898, where he was first to such renowned rivals as Charousek (second), Tchigorin (fourth), Steinitz (fifth) and Schlechter (equal sixth). But no mean place in the order of merit must be assigned to the second prize at Breslau in 1889, where Dr. Tarrasch achieved the first of his great series of successes, and such players as

The copy of the 1926 article from BCM

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1886	Nottingham	9	8	First
1887	Frankfort	20	9½	Equal eleventh
1887	London	10	8	Equal first with Gunsberg
1888	Bradford	16	10½	Fifth
1889	New York	41	27½?	Fifth
1889	Breslau	17	11½	Second
1889	Amsterdam	8	7	First
1895	Hastings	21	9½	Equal twelfth
1897	Berlin	19	12	Fifth
1898	Vienna	36	20	Equal sixth
1898	Cologne	15	11½	First
1900	Paris	19	12½	Fifth
1900	Munich	15	10½	Fourth
1905	Ostend	26	12½	Seventh
1905	Barmen	15	6	Fourteenth
1906	Ostend	30	18	Equal fourth
1907	Ostend	20	8	Fifth
1909	St. Petersburg	18	7	Equal fifteenth
1911	St. Petersburg	14	5	Thirteenth
1911	Carlsbad	25	11	Equal seventeenth
1912	Breslau	17	7½	Twelfth

During this period of international activity Burn did not altogether eschew competitions of a national or sectional character. Early in 1889 he won first prize in an Irish Chess Association tournament at Dublin, Pollock and Mason taking the next two places. In 1897-8-9 and 1901 he competed at Llandudno for the Craigside challenge cup, which he won three times in the four tournaments. He also won a Midland Counties tournament at Birmingham in 1899, with Atkins second.

Of individual match play there is not much to record. A match with Bird in 1886 (two more opposed styles of play could hardly be imagined) was begun as one of five up, with the score at four all was extended to ten up, and was finally drawn by agreement with the score at nine all. In the same year a match of five up with Capt. Mackenzie was drawn with a score of four all; the curiosity of this match is that Mackenzie won the

Burn playing John Owen
Source: Liverpool museum

first four games and Burn the last four. A match is known to have been played in 1875 with the Rev. John Owen, the leading player of the Liverpool Club until Burn's rise; this Burn won by 11 to 6. Mr. Owen, however, told the present writer (about 1895) that he had contested several matches with Burn, who had not always been the winner; no record remains of these encounters; but as neither player had any love for the practice of recording the moves of a game during its progress its absence is not surprising. Similarly, a short match was begun with the Rev. A. B. Skipworth at his Lincolnshire rectory, somewhere in the late eighties, but whether finished is doubtful; probably the record of this is buried in the files of a Horncastle or Louth newspaper in which Mr. Skipworth conducted a chess column at the time.

Burn took part in the matches by cable with America on four occasions. In 1896 and 1898 he lost to Showalter; in 1907 he drew with Marshall; and in 1911 he defeated Marshall (who was then in London) over the board.

His connection with the Liverpool Chess Club lasted from 1867 until his death. He served the offices of librarian in 1877, vice-president in 1880, president in 1881, 1888, 1889, 1890, 1891, 1892, 1908, 1909, 1910 and 1911. In 1887 he was elected an honorary member retaining that qualification until the end. In 1888 he was presented by the club with a handsome chessboard and set of chessmen, the box bearing an inscribed silver plate, in recognition of the tournament successes he had already achieved, and as a token of the high esteem in which he was held by his fellow members.

As a chess journalist Burn commenced in 1871 when he edited a column in the Liverpool Weekly Albion; how long this continued we do not know. In 1911 he became chess editor of the Liverpool Courier. His annotation of games for this column attracted widespread notice and was much quoted both at home and abroad. When therefore, on the death in 1913 of Leopold Hoffer, Burn was appointed to the Field, it was to the general satisfaction of British chessplayers everywhere. His treatment of the games published in that paper was of the most sound and reliable character, and no pains were ever spared to arrive at the inner secret of the most intricate position. The high standard set by Steinitz when editing the same column thirty to forty years before, was worthily maintained by his quondam pupil on becoming his successor.

Burn’s style of play was solid and prudent rather than aggressive; he has more than once mentioned with pardonable pride that amongst his peers of master rank he was chiefly famed for “stubborn defence.” A favourite aphorism was, “The player who combinates is lost!” Nevertheless it is to be at least suspected that this was the result of his early chess education and a strong power of self-control rather than of his predilections. An oft-repeated saying, perhaps the one which will be in London longest remembered, was “toujours attaque”; his preference for being first player was stronger than that of most players, strong as that often is; and when shown a game or position he had very little hesitation in taking sides, almost always with the attack; only with the defence when his initial judgment told him that unsoundness was afoot. But “counterattack is the soul of defence,” and in that he could be terrible. A collection of, say, twenty of his best games would probably yield a large preponderance of Black as his side. Once interested in a game (or position) his concentration upon it was of the most intense kind, and could only with difficulty be diverted. Even in skittle play, a cup of coffee, ordered at the start, would stand at his elbow unnoticed; was the opponent at some point long in moving he would suddenly become aware of its presence, and lift the cup; but let the opponent at the same instant raise his hand to move, back went the cup to the table untasted, and the beverage would be eventually consumed quite cold. His pipe fared little better; badly loaded, it took innumerable matches to light, was laid down after a few puffs, went out, and was re-lit with the same difficulty. Did a friendly onlooker hint that a difference in the loading of the pipe would save much trouble, he would, if he succeeded in gaining attention, be quietly and painlessly extinguished with “How long have you been a smoker?” The same intensity of concentration was carried into his work for the Field, and it is known that he often sat through the small hours of the morning to complete an analysis rather than interrupt the current of his ideas. Had he but spared himself in this respect ——!

Of short figure, slight frame, and abstemious in habit, he was remarkably “wiry”; at 77 his head of hair was quite untouched by the hand of time, and but for the grizzling of the beard he would have passed for no more than sixty. Perhaps a little difficult of approach by strangers, when his attention and interest were once gained he was the soul of courtesy, and would take unstinted trouble to oblige his interlocutor, or to help a colleague. At the chessboard his courtesy to his opponent was perfect; he “played the game” in the best sense of the words; and his tribute to Blackburne’s chivalry as an opponent was worth the more because it accorded with his own practice. With him passes the last of the line of English great masters!

J.H.B.

Burn's aggressive play and style

By Pete Tamburro

Here is a game with a reference to modern chess. What is now called the Colle-Zukertort Attack was not uncommon back in ancient times before Colle was playing. It is also another display of Burn's aggressive play, which often goes unrecognized. This is no doubt due in part to some well-known losses to Marshall (over all Burn was +2-6=5 vs. Marshall), he is seen by many as simply a solid, passive player. We see his feisty side in this game.

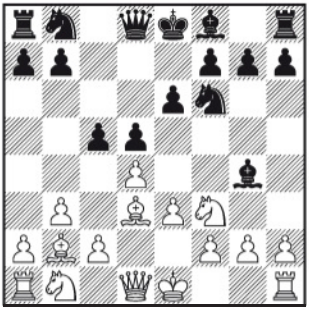
Alexander **Halprin** – Amos **Burn** [D04]

Wien Imperial Jubilee, Vienna, 1898

1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.e3 c5 4.b3 According to the MegaDatabase, this is only the second time (after Weiss) the pawn move is played at this point. In modern times, such warriors as Mamedyarov, Karjakin, Firouzja, Shabalov and even Smyslov have thought to play it here.

4...♗g4 An interesting response. What is also interesting is that following this game, Pillsbury, Marshall and Spielmann also made this move, perhaps inspired by this Burn game.

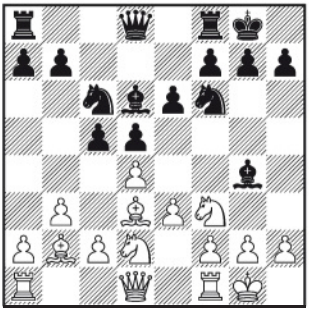
5.♗b2 e6 6.♗d3?!



One of the advantages of Burn's ♗g4, and perhaps the reason he chose this move, is that he will be playing the Orthodox Queen's Gambit Declined a move down. It also discourages White's overall plan that we saw in Openings for Amateurs - Next Steps (Janowski vs. Lasker, match, 1910) of the ♘e5 and f4 idea. Thus, 6.♗e2, to unpin the knight, seems the best way to continue that plan.

One hopeful continuation would be 6...♘c6 7.0-0 ♖c8 8.♘e5 ♘xe5? (Best is *8...♗xe2 9.♕xe2 cxd4 10.exd4 ♗e7 11.c4 dxc4 12.♘xc6 ♖xc6 13.bxc4* with an equal game, but with White having two worry about his vulnerable pawn duo.*)* 9.dxe5 ♗xe2 10.♕xe2 ♘d7 11.c4 dxc4 12.bxc4 ♗e7 13.f4 with a very nice kingside initiative and easy access to that side for all of White's pieces.

6...♘c6 7.♘bd2 ♗d6 8.0-0 0-0



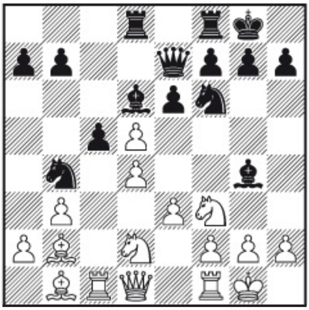
Halprin has his tabiya and Burn has his. The game is equal, but there is a lot of play, as we shall see.

9.c4 Maintaining the equal chances and giving his pieces more scope would have come from 9.h3 ♗h5 10.dxc5 ♗xc5 11.c4.

9...♕e7 10.♖c1 The equal chances stay with 10.h3 ♗xf3 11.♘xf3 dxc4 12.bxc4 cxd4 13.♘xd4 White has the two bishops on fine diagonals, offset by weak a2 and c4 pawns.

10...♖ad8 11.cxd5 ♘b4 The first sign of Burn getting frisky.

12.♗b1



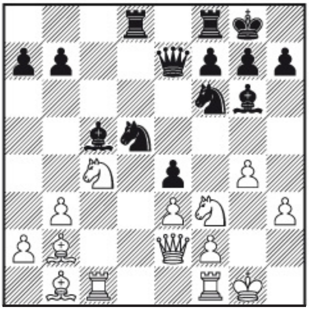
12...cxd4! Quite necessary as 12...♘fxd5 13.♘e4 ♗b8 14.♘xc5±.

13.♗xd4 The promising looking 13.♘c4 has a terrible flaw waiting for the player a bit down the road: 13...dxe3 14.fxe3 ♗xf3 15.♕xf3 ♘bxd5 16.e4 ♗c5+ 17.♔h1 ♘b6 18.e5 ♘fd5 19.♕h5 g6 20.♕h6 ♘xc4 21.♖xc4 ♘e3 22.♖h4 ♕xh4!! 23.♕xh4 ♘xf1 and Black is winning.

13...e5! A superbly alert move that can seize the initiative if White does not respond correctly. After the d5 pawn falls to the knight, Black will be threatening e4, and White will not be able to play e4 because it would cede f4 to the knight on d5. Thus, White will have to get ♘e4 in at some point.

14.♗b2 ♘bxd5 15.h3 ♗h5 16.g4? Yet another legacy of not putting the bishop on e2; however, White has an equalising line: 16.♘e4 ♘xe4 17.♕xd5 ♗xf3 18.gxf3 ♕g5+ (The easy way to draw. If Black wanted to drum up some attacking chances, he might try *18...♘g5 19.♔g2 ♘e6 20.♖fd1 f5)* 19.♔h1 ♘f6 20.♕xb7 ♕h5 21.♔g2 ♕g5+=).

16...♗g6 17.♘c4 ♗c5 18.♕e2 e4?!



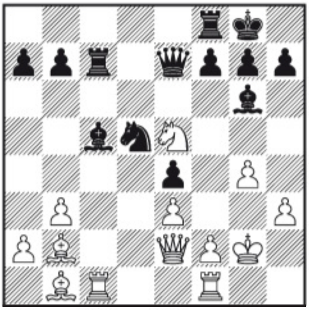
This is the right idea and certainly in keeping with the original e5 idea, but he needed a preliminary exchange with 18...♗xb1! 19.♖xb1 e4 because it would take a bishop with no or little range and trade it off for a bishop with more range, and it also weakens the d3 square, especially if a knight can take advantage of the light square bishop's absence. If you look closely, you will see both knights have that possible knight path.

19.♘fe5 Now, White is overcoming his kingside square weaknesses by getting a healthy presence in the centre.

19...♘d7 A tough decision. He dares White to take the bishop on g6.

20.♘xd7 And White declines! Why not 20.♘xg6 hxg6? It may be a case of seeing black ghosts and goblins infiltrating the weak squares on the kingside, but there is no concrete line for Black. 21.a3 a6 22.♖fd1 ♘7f6 23.b4 ♗a7 24.♘d2 and White's doing well.

20...♖xd7 21.♘e5 ♖c7 22.♔g2?



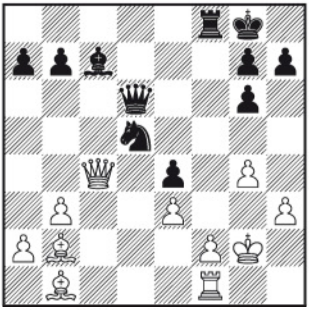
Halprin misses a chance to attack with 22.♖fd1 ♖d8 23.♖c4 ♘f6 24.♖xd8+ ♕xd8 25.h4+-.

22...♗d6 23.♖xc7 Picking up a pawn looks good, too: 23.♘xg6 hxg6 24.♖xc7 ♗xc7 25.♕c4 ♕d6 26.♕xe4.

23...♗xc7 24.♘xg6 fxg6 White's threats have dissipated, so taking with the f-pawn to open the rook's access to f3 is a logical idea.

25.♕c4?? He really needed to centralise that bishop: 25.♗d4 ♕d6 26.♖h1 ♕e6 27.b4 Making room for the other bishop on b3. They both need to be in the game. 27...h6 *(27...♘xb4 28.♗c5)* 28.♗c2 ♔h7 29.♗b3=.

25...♕d6!



Wins on the spot! Did you see it?

26.♖h1 ♖xf2+!! The only winning move, and its destructive force leads to an avalanche of checks. Realize, though, that Burn had to calculate all the variations to make sure White couldn't escape through some mouse hole. The queen and knight work well together, yet the bishop was a huge help as well.

27.♔xf2 ♕g3+ 28.♔f1 28.♔e2 ♕f3+ 29.♔d2 ♕xe3+ 30.♔c2 ♕f2+ 31.♔d1 ♕f3+ 32.♕e2 ♘e3+ 33.♔d2 ♗a5+ and the white queen is lost.

28...♕f3+ 29.♔g1 ♕xe3+ 30.♔f1 ♕f3+ 31.♔g1 ♕g3+ 32.♔f1 ♕f3+ He must be picking up time on the clock. It's not a repetition because a pawn has disappeared in this sequence.

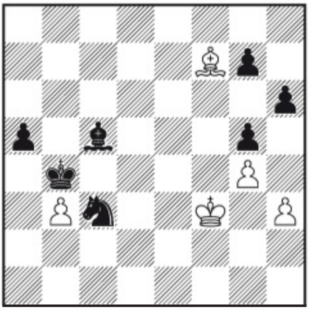
33.♔g1 e3! 34.♖h2 The queen dropping back doesn't help her spouse: 34.♕f1 e2! 35.♕xf3 e1♕+ 36.♕f1 ♕g3+ 37.♕g2 ♗b6+ 38.♔f1 ♘e3+ and we're done.

34...♕d1+ 35.♔g2 e2 36.♖h1 ♕xh1+! Quickest and deadliest way.

37.♔xh1 e1♕+ 38.♔g2 ♕g3+ 39.♔f1 ♕f3+ 40.♔g1 ♗b6+ 41.♗d4 ♕d1+ 42.♔g2 ♕xd4 Resignation would be appropriate here. What a battle!

43.♕xd4 ♗xd4 44.♗e4 ♘c3 45.♗xb7 ♘xa2 46.♗d5+ ♔f8 47.♔f3 ♘c3 48.♗c4 g5! A simple technical move denying the black king squares.

49.♔g3 ♔e7 50.♔f3 h6 51.♗g8 ♔d6 52.♗c4 ♔c5 53.♗f7 ♔b4 54.♗g8 a5 55.♗f7 ♗c5



55...♘a2 followed by ♘c1 and ♘xb3 would do the trick, too.

0-1

This game had a stressful give and take. In an equal struggle, Burn was more equal to the task at a critical moment. Halprin fought well and then at the critical moment missed a brilliant rook sacrifice worthy of any great attacking player. In this case the great attacking player was Amos Burn.

On the shoulders of a giant

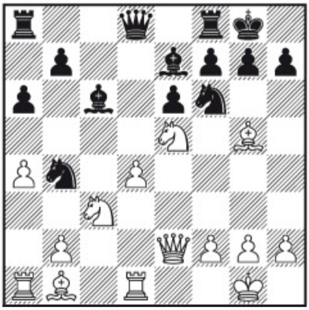
This game was played in the gruelling Ostend 1906 tournament, where Burn finished a highly respectable fourth place just behind Schlechter, Bernstein and Janowski yet ahead of Maroczy, Rubinstein and Marshall.

Amos **Burn** - Paul F **Johner [D60]**

Ostend Ostend (5), 09.06.1906

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5 ♗e7 5.e3 0-0 6.♘f3 ♘bd7 7.♗d3 c5 7...dxc4.

8.0-0 dxc4 9.♗xc4 a6 10.a4 cxd4 11.exd4 ♘b6 12.♗d3 ♘bd5 13.♕e2 ♗d7 14.♘e5 ♘b4 15.♗b1 ♗c6 16.♖d1



This is the critical position in this type of IQP opening. What has White going for him?

1. The finely posted knight at e5 that pins f7, and even c6 if you're a two bishop aficionado; however, as we've seen, the possible sac on f7 is a key part of many IQP attacks.
2. The pawn on d4 is a strength in the opening phase of the game because it supports the ♘e5 and, in various circumstances, can even threaten d5 as we've seen on these pages with Spassky-Avtonomov.
3. The ♘c3 can support a d5 thrust and even make its way to e4 in certain circumstances.
4. The ♖d1 indirectly attacks the black queen, supports a d5 thrust and, later, can even be lifted to d3 if Black plays ♘bd5.
5. The ♖a1 can be lifted to a3, and, as with the other rook, might find its way to the kingside.
6. The queen and bishop combo will be a threat on h7.
7. The ♗g5 may act as a threat to exchange on f6 to take away a protector of h7 or it may retreat to avoid exchanges. It all depends on the circumstances.

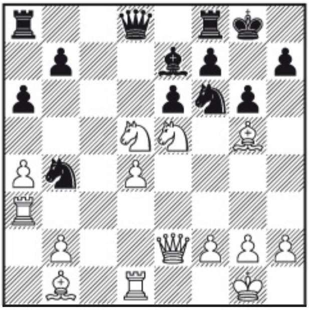
Now, let's flip it - what has Black got going for him?

1. The White d4 pawn is a weakness in the endgame. He has to figure out how to get there.
2. Exchanging minor pieces to accentuate the d4 pawn difficulty should be on Black's mind.
3. The d5 square is a time-honoured square for the knights in this type of defensive position.
4. The c-file will be a candidate for Black play as White's rooks will be looking for either ♖a3 or looking to keep the other rook on the d-file for the present.
5. The Black pawn position is solid.

16...♗d5? Johner, who has done well for 15 moves, violates two of his points above with this bishop move. He needed to offer exchanges with the knight move to d5, but which knight? This leads down some interesting paths. 16...♘fd5 17.♗d2 *(17.♕h5 g6 18.♘xg6 fxg6 19.♗xg6 hxg6 20.♕xg6+ ♔h8)* 17...♘f6 18.♗g5

♘fd5 19.♗c1 Trying everything to avoid exchanges and coax Black into making a bad alternate choice. 19...♘f6 (Unclear, but very interesting would have been *19...♖c8 20.♖a3 f5)* 20.♖a3 ♘bd5 21.♘xd5 ♕xd5 22.♖g3 ♗xa4 23.b3 ♗c6 (23...♗xb3 24.♖dd3 ♗c4 25.♖xg7+ ♔h8 *(*A fun mating pattern to learn: *25...♔xg7 26.♖g3+ ♔h8 27.♗h6 ♗xe2 28.♗g7+ ♔g8 29.♗xf6+ ♗g4 30.♖xg4#)* 26.♗h6 ♗xd3 27.♕xd3 ♕e4 28.♕xe4 ♘xe4 29.♗xe4 f5 30.♗xb7 ♖ae8 31.♗xa6 ♗d6 32.♘f7+ ♖xf7 33.♖xf7+-) 24.h4; Best seems 16...♘bd5 17.♘xc6 bxc6 18.♘xd5 *(18.♘e4 a5! 19.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 20.♗xf6 ♘xf6 21.♗e4 ♘xe4 22.♕xe4 ♕d5=)* 18...cxd5 19.♖d3 ♕b6 20.♖h3 h6 21.♗xh6 gxh6 22.♕d2 ♘g4 23.♖g3 f5 24.♕xh6 ♖f6 25.♖xg4+ fxg4 26.♕h7+ ♔f8 27.♕h8+ ♔f7=.

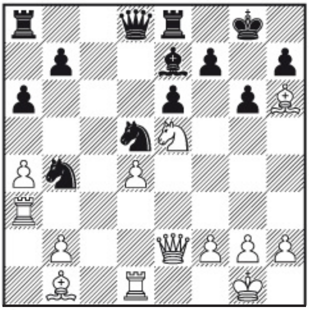
17.♖a3 g6 18.♘xd5!!



Not necessarily the intuitive choice, but a concrete one and a brilliant conception of an attacking idea in this system.

18...♘fxd5 Now, it doesn't seem to matter. 18...♘bxd5 19.♖b3 ♖b8 20.g4! ♕c7 21.♖c1 *(21.♗a2 ♖bc8 22.♗h6 ♖fd8 23.h4 ♗d6 24.h5 ♕c2 25.♕f3 ♕e4 26.♕xe4 ♘xe4 27.♖xb7 ♗xe5 28.dxe5 ♘c5 29.♖a7 ♘b4 30.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 31.♖c7 ♘xa4 32.♗b3 ♘xb2 33.f4 ♘2d3 34.f5 gxf5 35.gxf5 ♘d5 36.♗xd5 exd5 37.e6 fxe6 38.fxe6 ♖e8 39.♖g7+ ♔h8 40.♖g3+-)* 21...♕d6 22.♗h6 ♖fe8 23.♕f3±

19.♗h6 ♖e8

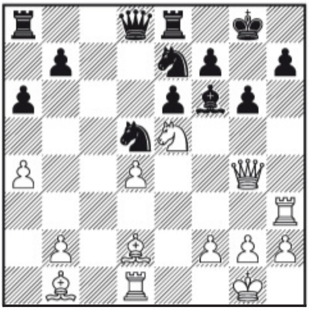


20.♖h3? As with Black's prior options, one inaccurate move and the position changes for White. 20.♖g3! ♗h4 21.♖g4 ♗f6 (21...f5 22.♘xg6 fxg4 23.♕xg4 ♗xf2+ 24.♔xf2 ♕f6+ 25.♔g1 hxg6 26.♖f1 ♕e7 *(26...♘e3 27.♗xe3 ♕g7 28.♗xg6 ♖e7 29.♕h5 ♖f8 30.♖xf8+ ♕xf8 31.♗h6 ♕f6 32.♗h7+ ♖xh7 33.♕e8+)* 27.♕xg6+ ♔h8 28.♖f7) 22.h4 ♗xh4 23.♗xg6 hxg6 24.♘xg6 fxg6 25.♖xg6+ ♔h7 26.♕e4+- mate to come in 7 at most. Now, Burn has to win it all over again, and he does!

20...♗f6= 21.♕g4 ♘e7? Johner experiences the fate of many defending a ferocious attack. A difficult defence makes one weary. Better was 21...♕e7.

22.♗d2! The bishop retreat could have been to c1 or f4 as well because the purpose is to clear the path for the rook to h7. The attack on the Nb4 is a nice touch, though, which should force Black to take the ♘e5.

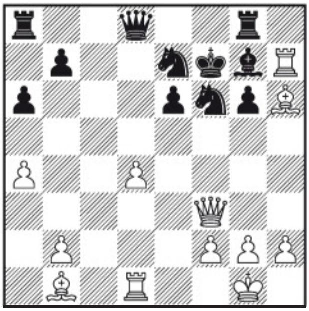
22...♘bd5



More stubborn resistance, but still ill-fated, came from 22...♗xe5 23.dxe5 ♘bd5 24.♕h4 h5 25.♕e4 ♔g7 26.♖xh5 ♖h8 27.♖xh8 ♕xh8 28.h4+-.

23.♘xf7!! A theme we've talked about in the Openings for Amateurs series on the IQP attacks. We always reference Browne-Zuckerman, NY, 1973 with respect to this attack; however, it is no picnic. Even Browne in his book bowed to the complexity of it. You have to study it! Here's Burn doing it in 1906!

23...♔xf7 24.♖xh7+ ♗g7 25.♗h6 ♖g8 26.♕f3+ ♘f6



The Black king is surrounded by his own men, his protective guard, yet he is completely lost.

27.♗a2! ♘ed5 If 27...♕d7 28.g4

28.g4 g5 29.h4 gxh4 30.g5 ♔f8 Perhaps hoping that unpinning the bishop will help. He can't find a way to return the piece for some salvation.

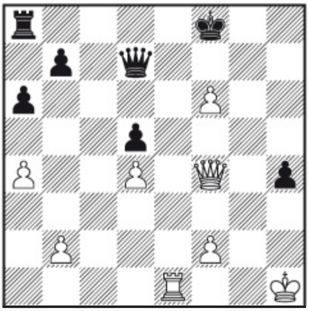
31.♖xg7 ♖xg7 32.♗xd5! One precise move after the other. What a great lesson game this is!

32...exd5 33.♔h1! ♔f7 34.♗xg7 ♔xg7 35.gxf6+ ♔f8 The point of Kh1 now becomes clear: 35...♕xf6 36.♖g1+ ♔f7 37.♕xd5+ ♔e7 38.♕xb7+

36.♕f4 36.♖g1 works, too. Black could have resigned here as well.

Amos Burn *Uncited Photo*

36...♕d7 37.♖e1



Black finally gives up the game.

1-0

Burn managed to give us two examples in one game of his attacking prowess. As with all IQP attacks, both sides have to be on their most alert mode. A mystery for me arose when I decided to check on the BCM reporting of the game--and there was none! This was unfortunate as this is the seminal game in this entire system. Hopefully, this recognition will make up for the omission of Burn's historic game back then.

On the shoulders of a giant...

THE SUSSEX UNIVERSITY INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT

By IM Shaun Taulbut

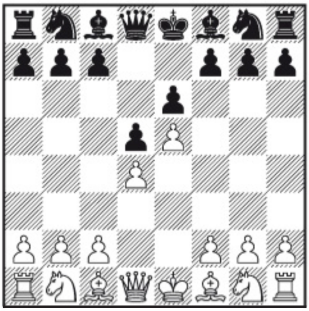
This was the first all-play-all organised by Sussex University to provide opportunities for international master norms and was won by Spanish international master Adrian Suarez Uriel with 7/9.

We look at the following excellent game by the winner of the tournament against Peter Large featuring the Advance variation against the French Defence.

Adrian **Suarez Uriel** - Peter **Large**

Sussex University Inv IM Brighton ENG (8.1)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 The Advance variation; White establishes a space advantage and prevents the black knight from developing on f6, thus hampering Black's development on the kingside.



3...♘e7 The main alternative attacking the White pawn chain is 3...c5 4.c3 ♘c6 5.♘f3 with a slight edge for White. Now the black knight can go to f5 or g6, depending on how White plays on the kingside

4.♘f3 b6 Black prepares to play either ...♗a6 or ...♗b7, developing the queenbishop before deciding where to place the other minor pieces.

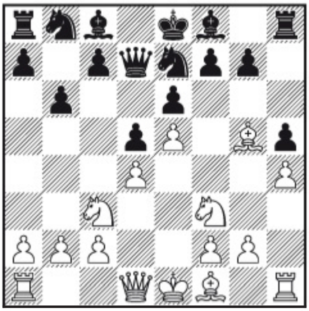
5.h4 Also possible is 5.♗d3 ♗a6 6.♗xa6 ♘xa6 when White has a slight edge. White is threatening to play h5 further cramping the Black kingside so Black decides to block this advance.

5...h5 After 5...♗a6 6.♗xa6 ♘xa6 7.♘c3 ♕d7 8.♕e2 ♘b4 9.h5 White is slightly better;

5...c5 6.c3 ♘bc6 7.h5 f6 is worth consideration changing plans by attacking the White central pawn chain.

6.♗g5 White makes use of the outpost on g5 pinning the black knight on e7, so Black unpins by moving the Queen to d7 a natural square.

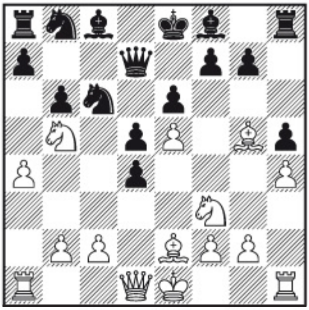
6...♕d7 7.♘c3



7...c5 The main alternative is 7...♗a6 8.♗xa6 ♘xa6 9.♘e2 c5 10.0-0 ♘f5 11.c3 with an edge for White. Now White creates an outpost on b5 making it difficult for Black to carry out his plan of exchanging the light squared bishops with ...♗a6.

8.a4 ♘ec6 If 8...♗a6 9.♗b5 ♗xb5 10.axb5 with an edge for White as the pawn on b5 cramps Black's queenside.

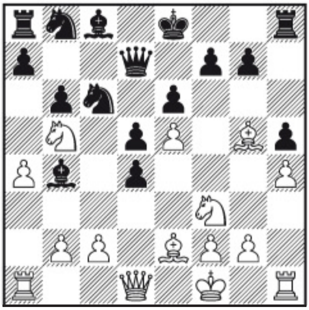
9.♗e2 cxd4 10.♘b5



White prepares to capture on d4 with the queenknight, thus keeping e5 protected.

10...♗b4+ 10...a6 11.♘bxd4 with an edge for White.

11.♔f1 A strong continuation; the white king is safe here and the king rook can enter the game via h3.

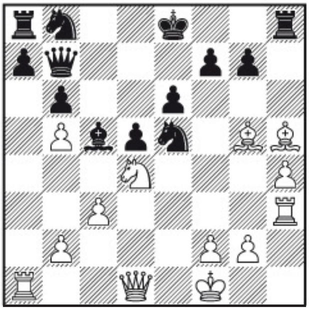


11...♗a6 12.♖h3 A strong development of the rook; a number of possibilities for this rook on the third rank emerge.

12...♕b7 13.♘fxd4 ♗c5 If 13...♘xe5 14.♗f4 ♘bd7 15.♖e3 ♗xb5 16.♘xb5 with a strong attack for White.

14.c3 ♗xb5 After 14...♘xe5 15.♗xh5 g6 16.♗e2 ♘bc6 17.♗f6 with strong play for White.

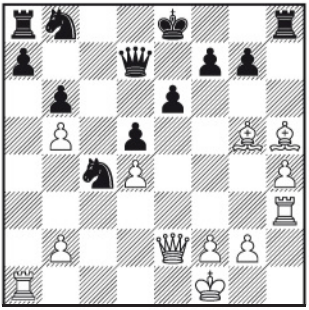
15.axb5 ♘xe5 16.♗xh5



Material is equal but White has a big advantage; there is the threat of ♘xe6 and the Black knight on b8 cannot go to the natural square on c6 because of the pawn on b5.

16...♕d7 If 16...♗xd4 17.cxd4 ♘ed7 18.♕e2 0-0 19.♖g3 White has a winning attack eg 19...♕c7 20.♗e7 ♖e8 21.♕g4.

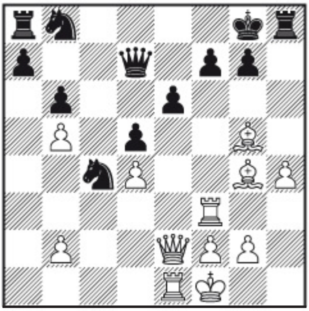
17.♕e2 ♗xd4 18.cxd4 ♘c4



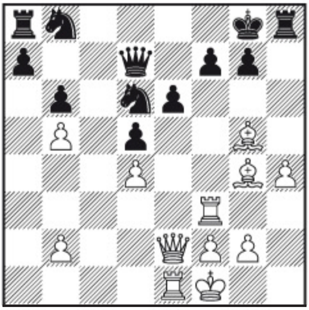
The Black knight is active but, White has several active pieces and uses his development advantage for a direct attack down the e-file and against the pawns on e6 and f7.

19.♖e1 ♔f8 If 19...g6 20.♗g4 ♕xb5 21.♗xe6 ♘d2+ 22.♗xd2 ♕xe2+ 23.♖xe2 fxe6 24.♖xe6+ ♔f7 25.♖d6 with a winning position for White.

20.♗g4 ♔g8 21.♖f3 The culmination of White’s strategy; the major pieces are trained on e6 and f7.



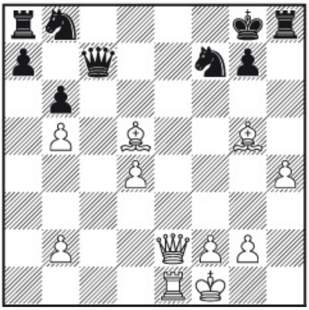
21...♘d6



After 21...f5 22.♗h3 ♔f7 23.g4 g6 24.gxf5 exf5 25.b3 ♘d6 26.♕e5 is winning as the rook and ♕f6+ are threatened.

22.♖xf7 The destructive sacrifice is still possible even though Black has defended f7.

22...♘xf7 23.♗xe6 ♕c7 24.♗xd5



White has sacrificed a rook but Black must lose material back and his king is stuck without a pawn defensive shield.

24...♘d7 Black can return a piece with 24...♘c6 25.bxc6 ♖c8 but then 26.♕f3 g6 27.♖e7 is winning; or 24...g6 25.♕d3 ♔g7 26.♖e6 ♔f8 27.♕xg6 a6 28.♖e7 is winning.

25.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 26.♕e6+ Mating

1-0

SUSSEX UNIVERSITY INV IM BRIGHTON ENG WED 27TH AUG 2025 - SUN 31ST AUG 2025.
CATEGORY: 2. AVE: (2277)

Rk	Name	FED	Elo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Pts	TPR
1	IM **Suarez Uriel, Adrian**	ESP	2399	*	1	=	1	1	1	1	=	1	0	7	2483
2	CM **Collins, Adam**	IRL	2221	0	*	1	=	1	=	=	1	1	1	6.5	2449
3	IM **Garcia Martin, Marta**	ESP	2330	=	0	*	=	=	1	=	1	1	1	6	2396
4	GM **Gormally, Daniel W**	ENG	2413	0	=	=	*	=	=	1	1	1	=	5.5	2341
5	IM **Large, Peter G**	ENG	2291	0	0	=	=	*	1	=	=	=	=	4	2232
6	FM **Banerjee, Supratit**	ENG	2242	0	=	0	=	0	*	1	1	0	1	4	2237
7	FM **Southcott-Moyers, Indy**	ENG	2276	0	=	=	0	=	0	*	=	2	=	3.5	2197
8	CM **Flynn, Jacob**	IRL	2237	=	0	0	0	=	0	=	*	=	1	3	2156
9	CM **Finn, Peter**	ENG	2205	0	0	0	0	=	1	0	=	*	1	3	2160
10	**Brewer, Callum D**	ENG	2152	1	0	0	=	=	0	=	0	0	*	2.5	2124

BOBBY, FIDEL AND ME IN HAVANA

By Grandmaster Raymond Keene OBE

Images: Ray Keene's private archive

In the Autumn of 1966, Tigran Petrosian, the wily Grandmaster from Armenia, had recently defeated his fellow Soviet challenger Boris Spassky, to become the first reigning champion to win a title match since 1934. Meanwhile, a rampant Bobby Fischer was actively staking his future claim to the title, while the Danish grandmaster Bent Larsen, having annihilated Petrosian in two games from a tournament in Santa Monica, was about to embark on a triumphal tournament procession — the best year of his life. The year 1967 was, indeed, to become Larsen's annus mirabilis.

All of the above cast, not to mention the author of this column, had assembled in the latter part of 1966 for the Havana Olympiad, or world team competition. This huge event was presided over by the cigar-smoking Cuban revolutionary dictator, Fidel Castro, with whom I and the other team members enjoyed several official dinners and other functions.

It should be added that, of all his numerous accolades, Fischer never had, nor would, win the Olympiad gold medal for the best score on top board. In his various Olympiad appearances, the gold always eluded him, going to Mikhail Tal in 1960, to Fridrik Olafsson in 1962, and - in 1966 - as we shall see, to Petrosian. In Fischer's final Olympiad outing, 1970, it went to the then world champion Boris Spassky, who crushed The American Meteor in their mano-a-mano game.

Ray Keen and Fidel Castro in Havana (source: Private Archive)

THE HAVANA OLYMPIAD

At the 1966 Olympiad in Havana, where Petrosian garnered the first of his golds, it was openly said that he ducked his most dangerous opponent, Bobby Fischer. Meanwhile, Fischer, who had been on course himself to win the gold medal, overreached himself at the last moment. The American lost against the nervous but talented Romanian Grandmaster, Florin Gheorghiu — thus, the story goes, letting Petrosian sneak past at the final post.

The truth, though, is somewhat different. For the USA vs USSR match, the initial line-up was, indeed, Fischer vs. Petrosian. I was there, I saw the name cards and I know why that game never took place. What happened was this: because of some footling complaint by Fischer, involving the half-baked timetable of some new age religious cult to which Fischer had temporarily subscribed, the USA team failed to show up and was defaulted. Petrosian, therefore, through no conniving of his own, had won the first round, beating Fischer by default when the American top board simply did not appear for the game.

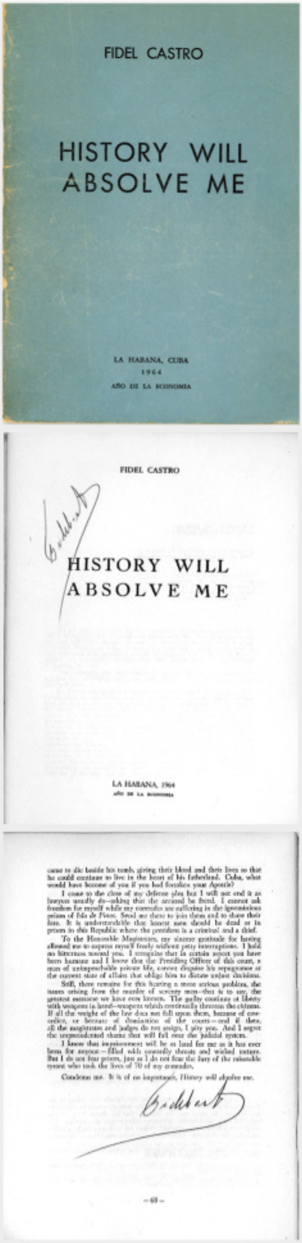
Generously, however, adhering to the principle of noblesse oblige, the USSR allowed a replay at a later time, originally designated as a free day. Petrosian, meanwhile, had become involved in various lengthy adjournments. He may also have been understandably reluctant to replay a game he had already won by default. It will be recalled that Boris Spassky, when defending his world crown against Fischer six years later in the Reykjavik Match of the Century, was perfectly happy to accept a default when Fischer was a no-show for game two. Certainly, Spassky was gentleman enough not to claim the entire match at this stage, which he might well have done, but his decision to pocket the whole point from the game Fischer had defaulted evoked no criticism from any quarter. I know from experience that it is psychologically very difficult to replay at full strength a game you have already won. Spassky knew that in 1972 and Petrosian knew it also in 1966.

PETROSIAN, LARSEN AND A SECOND CHANCE FOR THE US

Returning to Havana, with the USA given a second chance, the USSR rested Petrosian and wheeled out Spassky on top board, a draw against Fischer being the ultimate outcome. What is also overlooked, apart from Petrosian's undoubted initial willingness to meet Fischer, was that Bent Larsen was actually considered by the Soviets the main threat to Petrosian at the time, having not long beforehand twice beaten the World Champion in the Piatigorsky Cup. Larsen was, indeed, about to embark on a fabulous series of tournament victories, which almost brought him to the very top.

Petrosian, however, refused to duck this challenge and came out fighting against Larsen with Black, determined to win. For the World Champion, this game - and not the unplayed one against Fischer - must have seemed the supreme challenge of the entire Olympiad, with his reputation as world champion riding on the result. A win for Petrosian would have been sweet revenge and a vindication of his status as number one. A third consecutive loss, on the other hand, to the same opponent would have been a disastrous blow to his prestige. Had Petrosian been animated by cowardly or base motives, this surely would have been the game and the opponent to avoid.

Instead, Petrosian achieved a cliff edge victory with his patent exchange sacrifice. I was actually standing by the board, watching, when Petrosian made his fateful Decision. And what of the game between Larsen and Fischer from Havana - who won that? Well, oddly enough, Fischer, who had also lost a game to Larsen in the Piatigorsky Cup, decided to take a rest that day and allowed another team member to face the great Dane. Unsurprisingly, the "Bobby was robbed" lobby failed to stress this inconvenient fact when claiming vociferously that their man should have won the gold medal.



FIDEL CASTRO

HISTORY WILL
ABSOLVE ME

LA HABANA, CUBA
1964
AÑO DE LA ECONOMIA

FIDEL CASTRO

HISTORY WILL
ABSOLVE ME

LA HABANA, 1964

Ray Keene's personal copy of Fidel Castro's autobiography, signed twice by the Cuban leader

Fidel Castro took a keen interest in the competition. He declined a draw against Petrosian in a giant simul in Havana main square, but went on to lose. He enjoyed Bobby's company and cudgelled his revolutionary brains for some time, without success, when asked by Fischer to find the decisive combination from Morphy's win against the Duke of Brunswick and Count Isouard. Finally, Fidel hosted a dinner (pork, rice and black bean sauce) which I attended. Having had the foresight to bring along a copy of his autobiography, I was rewarded with two signatures, one at the front and the other at the back.

The games of the Olympiad were, of course, Petrosian's win v Larsen and Fischer's loss to Gheorghiu!!… and it's worth mentioning that in the space of a few months in 1966, Petrosian defeated Spassky (twice), Larsen and Botvinnik, all with exchange sacrifices.

Bent **Larsen** - Tigran **Vartanovich Petrosian**

Havana ol (Men) fin-A Havana CUB (4), 07.11.1966

1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.exd5 Larsen takes the world champion down a murky theoretical lane. 4. e5 is more usual.

4...exd5 5.d4 c6 6.♗d3 ♗d6 7.0-0 0-0 8.♘e2 The last time this move was employed in a top-level contest, 8.♗g5 (or h3) now preferred.

8...♖e8 9.♘g3?! It is true that this improves on 9.♗f4 Subhavan-Ghosh, Colombo, 2024, but it only equalises.

9...♘bd7 10.♘f5 ♘f8 11.♘xd6 ♕xd6 12.♘e5 ♘6d7 13.♗d2 f6 14.♕h5 ♖xe5 ?! Another slight inaccuracy helps to develop White's initiative. Black should perhaps prefer, 14...♕e6 or ...♖e7 to keep White honest and constrain his momentum.

For example:

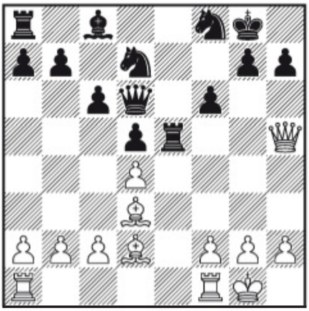
Raymond D. Keene
PARTAGAS
8-9-8

Cigar box (full of Partagas 8-9-8 at the time) presented to Keene on behalf of Fidel Castro (source: Private Archive)

a) 14...♖e7 15.f4 c5 16.♖ae1 f5 17.dxc5 ♘xc5 18.♗b4 ♕b6 19.♗xc5 ♕xc5+ 20.♔h1;

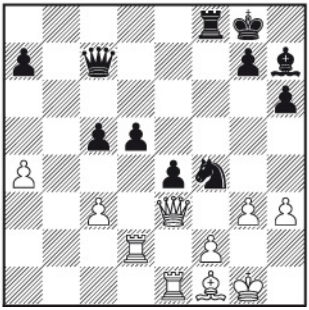
b) 14...♕e6 15.♘g4 ♕f7 16.♕xf7+ ♔xf7 17.f4 ♘e6 18.c3 ♘c7 19.♘e3 ♔g8; with an edge.

However, Petrosian has - as reported earlier - a great tradition and track record of this exchange sacrifice, and his experience here counts for a good deal beyond mere calculation.



15.dxe5 fxe5 16.♖fe1 e4 17.♗f1 ♘f6 18.♕h4 ♗f5 19.♕g3 ♕e7 20.c3 ♘e6 21.♗e3 ♘g4 22.h3 ♘xe3 23.♖xe3 ♖f8 24.♕e5 ♗g6 25.♖d1 ♕f7 26.♖d2 ♘f4

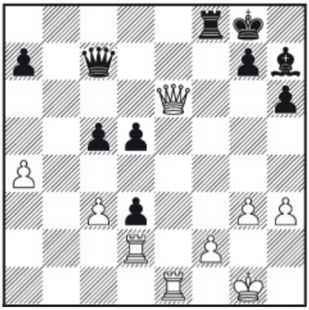
27.b4 h6 28.a4 ♗h7 29.♕d4 b6 30.♖e1 ♕c7 31.♕e3 c5 32.bxc5 bxc5 33.g3?



Losing any residual advantage by forcing Black to play what they had intended. It was better to compete for the b-file: 33.♖b1 ♗g6 34.♖b5 ♖c8 35.a5 ♘d3 36.♖d1 ♔h7, with an edge.

33...♘d3 34.♗xd3 exd3 35.♕e6+? White slips further behind when, 35.♖xd3 ♗xd3 36.♕xd3 ♖d8;

Or, 35.♕e7 ♕xe7 36.♖xe7 c4 37.♖d7 ♖b8 38.f4 ♗e4, was sufficient to retain a balanced position.



35...♕f7 36.♕xf7+? Incremental deficits were mounting up, and this further inaccuracy by White slides him past a tipping point of viability.

Necessary were either, 36.♖e5 ♕xe6 37.♖xe6 c4 38.♖d6 ♗e4 39.♖d7 ♖f7 40.♖d8+ ♔h7 41.a5;

Or, 36.♕d6 ♗e4 37.♖xe4 dxe4 38.♕xc5 ♕f3 39.♕e5 ♖f7 40.♕d4;

White is worse but can persevere a while longer.

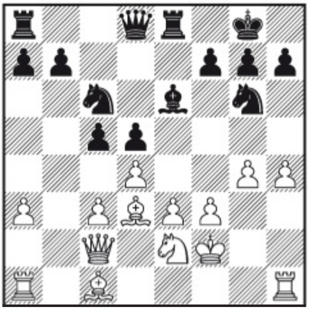
36...♔xf7 37.♖b2 c4 38.f3 d4 39.♖c1 ♔e6 40.♔f2 ♗e4 41.f4 ♖e8 42.g4 ♗c6 43.♖e1+ ♔d5 44.♖xe8 ♗xe8 45.cxd4 c3 46.♖b8 d2 47.♖d8+ ♔c4 48.♖c8+ ♔d3

0-1

Florin **Gheorghiu** - Robert James **Fischer**

Havana ol (Men) fin-A Havana CUB (12), 17.11.1966

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.f3 d5 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.bxc3 0-0 7.cxd5 exd5 8.e3 ♘h5 9.♕c2 ♖e8 10.g4 ♘f4 11.h4 c5 12.♔f2 ♘g6 13.♗d3 ♘c6 14.♘e2 ♗e6?! A poor move. There is some history with 14... c4!? (which the machine likes), but not at a master level. Top silicon choice was 14...♘f8. After the move played, White is comfortable.

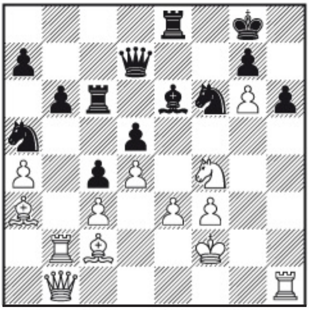


15.g5?! This fails to capitalise on Black's last. Better were,15.♖b1 or h5, with some advantage.

15...♖c8 16.h5 ♘f8 17.g6 fxg6 18.hxg6 h6 19.♕b1 ♘a5 Ceding some advantage to White, again. After, 19...♘e7! 20.a4 ♖c6 21.dxc5 ♘d7 22.♘d4 ♖f8 23.f4 ♖f6

24.♘xc6 bxc6 25.♗c2 ♗f5 26.c4 ♘xc5 27.♗b2, Black could remain equal.

20.♘f4 c4 21.♗c2 ♖c6 22.♖a2 ♘d7 23.a4 ♘f6 24.♗a3 ♕d7 25.♖b2 b6? An easy mistake to make. Had Black been bolder, he could keep the position near level.



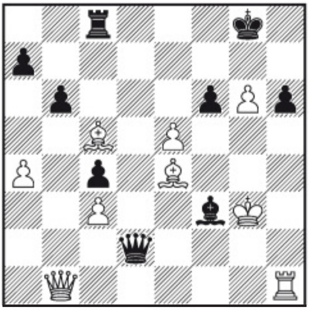
However, the correct line is not at all easy to find, over the board. After, 25...♘b3! 26.a5 (not, 26.♗xb3 cxb3 27.♖xb3) 26...♗g4 27.♕d1 (and not, 27. fxg4 ♘xg4+ 28.♔g1 ♘xe3 29.♗xb3 ♕g4+ 30.♘g2 cxb3) 27...b6 28.♖a2 ♗f5 29.♗xb3 cxb3 30.♕xb3 ♗e4 31.♖g1 (and again, not, 31.fxe4 ♖xc3) 31...♕f5 32.axb6 axb6, Black has almost fully equalised.

26.♖b5? White misses a clear opportunity to exploit Black's last misjudgement. After, 26.e4! dxe4 27.♗xe4 ♖cc8 28.♖e2 ♕xa4 29.♕b4 ♕d7 30.♖he1 ♗f5 31.♕d6, White is close to winning.

26...♘b7 27.e4!

27...dxe4 28.♗xe4 ♖cc8 29.♖e5 ♗g4 30.♘d5 ♖xe5 31.♘xf6+ gxf6 32.dxe5 ♘c5 33.♗xc5 ♕d2+ 34.♔g3 ♗xf3?? Small differences, Black steps over the threshold of losing to - lost. Although, 34...♗e6 35.♕d1 ♕g5+ 36.♔f2 bxc5 37.exf6 ♕xf6 38.♕c1 ♕g5 39.♕xg5 hxg5 40.♖h5 ♗d7 41.♗d5+ ♔g7 42.♖h7+, puts up more of a fight, the game is long gone.

Bobby Fischer playing against Fidel Castro in a simul in Havana, 1966
Source: Wikipedia



35.♗xf3!? White is winning, but misses an absolutely crushing finish, 35.♔xf3!! ♖xc5 36.♕d1 ♕xd1+ 37.♖xd1 f5 38.♗xf5 ♖xe5 39.♖d8+ ♔g7 40.♖d7+ ♔f6 41.♖f7+ ♔g5 42. g7, and mate in 11.

35...♖xc5 36.♕c1 ♕xc1 37.♖xc1 ♖xe5 38.♔f4 ♔g7 39.♗e4 h5 40.♖d1 ♖e7 41.♖d5 ♔h6 42.♖d6 ♔g7 43.♖c6 h4 44.♖xc4 h3 45.♔g3 ♔h6 46.♗b1 ♖e3+ 47.♔h2 ♖e1 48.♗d3 ♖e3 49.♖h4+ ♔g5 50.g7

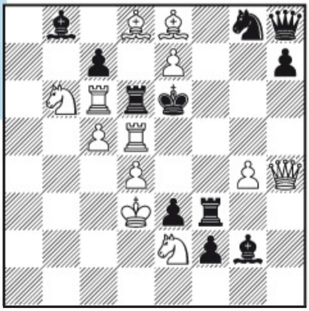
1-0

PROBLEM WORLD

by Christopher Jones
cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk
Grandmaster of Chess Composition

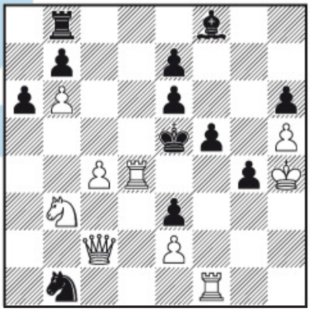
Solutions are given on page 702

1



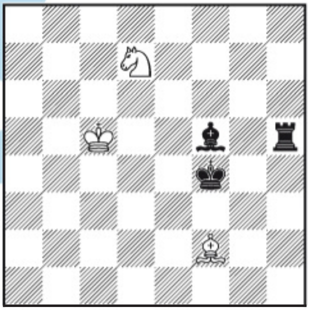
Abdelaziz Onkoud (France)
Mate in2
ORIGINAL

2



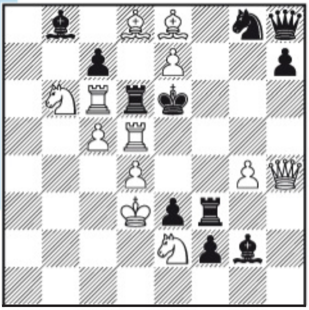
Leonid Lyubashevsky (Israel)
Mate in 4
ORIGINAL

3



Stanislav Hudak (Slovakia)
Helpmate in 3 - 2 solutions
ORIGINAL

4



Ljubomir Ugren (Slovenia)
Helpmate in 6
ORIGINAL

QUOTES AND QUERIES

FORGOTTEN FLAMES

Two long-forgotten opening ideas - the audacious Portsmouth Gambit and the enterprising Philidor Counter-Gambit - once stirred excitement but have since vanished from top-level play. This month's column revisits these curiosities through illustrative games that show why they faded, yet remain lively weapons at faster time controls.

By Alan Smith

Some opening ideas have not stood the test of time. What this means is that they are absent from grandmaster praxis. This month I will examine two such, which may still be playable at quick time limits.

6311 Your columnist first came across the Portsmouth Gambit in Leonard Barden's *Guardian* column of 18th November 1978. This featured several brisk games with 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.b4!? White's idea is to gain time by harassing black's knight on c6.

Here are two Bruce Hayden games which illustrate black's problems.

Bruce **Hayden – Rozomov**

Sussex – Oxfordshire, 1961

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.b4 cxb4 4.d4 This is more testing than Gerald Abrahams 4.♗b2. **4...d5 5.exd5 Qxd5 6.c4 bxc3 7.♘xc3 ♕d8?** Black needed to find 7...♕a5, but after 8.d5 Black still needs to be careful 8...♕xc3+? 9.♗d2 ♕f6 10.dxc6 bxc6 11.♖c1 Yuchtman - Dzhalalov Moscow ch 1956, black's best is 8...e6! when white should reply 9.dxc6 ♗b4 10.♘d2 Barden.

8.d5 ♘b8 Black has an extra pawn, but no developed pieces.

9.♗c4 ♘f6 10.0–0 g6 11.♖e1 ♗g7 11...a6! **12.d6 e6 13.♘b5 ♘a6 14.d7+!** A simple clearance sacrifice breaks up Black's position. **14...♘xd7 15.♘d6+ ♔f8 16.♘xf7! ♔xf7 17.♗xe6+ ♔f8 18.♗a3+**

1–0

Birmingham Mail, 9th December 1961

Bruce **Hayden – Chapman**

London League, 1966

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.b4 cxb4 4.d4 d6 Kurajica made 4...g6 work.

5.d5 ♘e5 6.♘xe5 dxe5 7.♗b2 ♕c7 7...♘f6 returning the pawn should allow Black to reach the middlegame.

8.c4 bxc3 9.♘xc3 ♘f6 10.♖c1 ♕a5 11.♗b5+ ♗d7 12.♗xd7+ ♘xd7 13.0–0 ♖c8 14.♕e2 a6 15.♘b5 ♖xc1 16.♖xc1 f6 17.♘c7+ ♔f7 18.♕g4 ♘c5 19.♕c8 ♕a4 20.♘e6 ♘d3 21.♘g5+ ♔g6 22.♕f5+ ♔h5 23.g4+ ♔h4 24.♘f3+ ♔h3 25.♕h5#

Field, 14th April 1966

6312 The Philidor Counter Gambit 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 f5 is no longer popular. Recommended by Philidor in the 18th century, Morphy was a fan, and his influence persisted into the 1870s. Then, white no longer accepted the offered pawn, and results declined. Jonathan

Mestel revived it in 1975, added some new ideas and the counter-gambit was back in business. Advances in analysis have not been kind to black's chances.

Tony Kosten's fine book *Winning with the Philidor*, published in 1992, contains much original analysis including: 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 f5 4.dxe5 fxe4 5.♘g5 d5 6.e6 ♘h6 7.♘c3 c6 8.♘gxe4 ♘f5!? Some years later, I found obscure games featuring this novelty.

John **Withers - Justice**

Bristol, CC 1848

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 f5 4.dxe5 4.♘c3 is more testing.

4...fxe4 5.♘g5 d5 6.e6 ♘h6 7.♘c3 c6 8.♘gxe4 This dates back to games by George Atwood.

8...♘f5!? Black is struggling after 8...dxe4 9.♕h5+.

9.♘g5 ♗c5 10.♗d3 Improving on a previous game, 10.g4? ♘d4 11.♘f7? ♕f6 12.♘xh8 ♘f3+ 13.♔e2 b6 0-1 Withers - Justice Bristol 1848.

10...♕f6 11.0–0 h6? This was the time to castle.

12.♘gxe4! dxe4 13.♘xe4 ♕e7 14.♕h5+ ♔d8 15.♗g5! hxg5 16.♕xh8+ ♔c7 17.♘xc5 ♕xc5 18.♗xf5 ♕xf5 Black seems okay, but he has forgotten to round up the e6 pawn.

19.e7! ♗d7 20.♕d8+ ♔d6 21.e8=♕...

1–0

Bristol Mirror, 4th March 1848

H. E. **Elliott** – W. L. **Volckman**

Correspondence, 1895

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 f5 4.dxe5 fxe4 5.♘g5 d5 6.♘c3 c6 7.e6 ♘h6 8.♘gxe4 ♘f5!? 9.♘g5 ♕f6 10.♘xd5 Kosten analysed 10.♗d3 h6 11.0-0 ♗d7 12.♖e1+ ♗e7 13.♕e2 0-0 and also 11.♕f3 g6 12.g4. **10...♕e5+** Black could also try 10...cxd5 11.♗b5+ ♘c6 12.♕xd5 ♘fd4.

11.♘e3 ♗xe6 12.♘xe6 ♕xe6 13.♗c4 ♕e4 14.♕e2 Forcing the exchange of queens with 14.♕g4! was best. White has the bishop pair and an extra pawn.

14...♘d4 15.♕d2 ♘d7 16.0–0 0–0–0 17.f3? This weakens e3**.**

17...♕f4 18.c3 ♘f5 19.♕d3?? White is fine after 19.♗xf5 ♕xf5 20.♕f4 **19...♗c5!**

0–1

Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate, 6th July 1895

6313 John Withers (1804 - 1882) was the leading player in Bristol after Elijah Williams moved to London. The 21-move win above is more characteristic of his play than the 13-move miniature. He was responsible for new ideas in the Giuoco Piano and the Caro-Kann which he successfully introduced in games with Williams.

6314 Bruce Hayden (1907 - 1997) was a dashing player who conducted a chess column in the West Sussex Gazette 1929-1932 and wrote a chatty book on chess, *Cabbage Heads and Chess Kings*, published in 1960.

Endgame Studies

by Ian Watson
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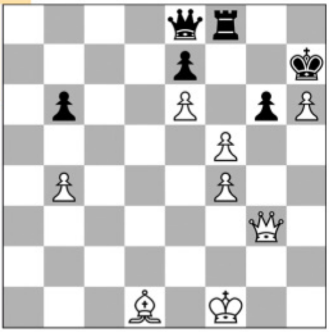
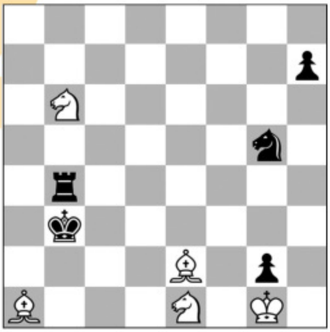
1



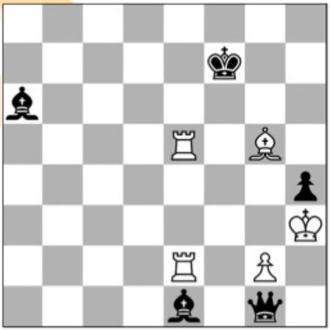
O. Pervakov
Moscow-850 AT 1997
WIN

2



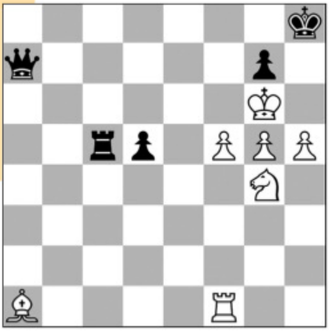
M. Gromov & O. Pervakov
Amiryan MT 2025
WIN

3



O. Pervakov & K. Sumbatyan
Amiryan MT 2025
DRAW

4



O. Pervakov
Amiryan MT 2025
WIN

CELEBRATING THE WORLD CHAMPION

The current endgame study-composing World Champion is Oleg Pervakov. In July’s column, we looked at the studies which won him the title. He also composes studies for use in solving competitions, and this month, your task is to solve three of them.

First, however, we’ll look at a study from earlier in his career, which took part in the composing competition that was held to celebrate Moscow’s 850th anniversary in 1997. This study is based on the ’foresight’ theme - a move very early in the solution that you would only play if you had already seen right to the end of the solution. White’s first move is 1.♗a4, and the only reason to play this move is to force the Black b-pawn to b5, which seems to be irrelevant, and which is only explained when you see the final, 10th, move of the solution. The solution goes **1.♗a4 b5 2.fxg6+ ♕xg6 3.♗c2 ♖xf4+ 4.♔g1 ♖f6 5.♕g5 ♖xe6 6.♔f1 ♖f6+ 7.♔e1 ♖e6+ 8.♔d1 ♖d6+ 9.♔c1 ♖c6 10.♕c5** and wins. After 10.♕c5, Black is forced to capture on c5, and then the resulting White passed pawn runs home. The thematic try1.fxg6+? fails because the c5 square is guarded by the b6 pawn. The White king walk along the first rank, while under fire from the Black major pieces, is as attractive as the foresight, and is forced because of 8.♔d2? ♖e2+. There are only a few sidelines, notably 2...♔g8 3.g7 ♖xf4+ 4.♕xf4 bxa4 5.♕f5 a3 6.h7+ ♔xg7 7.♕f7+ ♕xf7+ 8.exf7, and in this line 3...♖f6 4.h7+ ♔xh7 5.♗c2+ ♔g8 6.♕h4.

The three studies for you to solve were used in the Hamlet Amiryan Memorial Tournament for chess solving, held in Yerevan, Armenia, in October. The tournament was won by Danila Pavlov, another winner of multiple World Championships, but his being the World Championship for chess solving. He has competed infrequently recently, perhaps due to travel difficulties for Russian citizens, but he continues to win every tournament he does take part in. Uncharacteristically, he didn’t get full marks on the three studies, scoring only 1, 5, and 0 on them, so you have a chance to outdo the strongest solver who has ever lived!

For the three studies: the usual solving procedures apply: you’ll need to set up these positions on a board. In solving events, you can use a chess set and you can move the pieces to try and help you solve. You solve against the clock; for these three studies give yourself 100 minutes in total. Points are awarded according to how much of the composer’s solution you find, with five points available for each study if you find it all. In the answers, I’ll show you where the points were awarded. You need to find the composer’s main line; you can also write down sidelines if you’re not sure what the main line is, but only the main line moves earn points. So, look for the most artistic, elegant line.

The answers are on page 703.

SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS (See page 697)

This month’s originals

A sombre note this month - the great Slovenian composer Ljubomir Ugren recently died. He will be greatly missed - correspondence with him was always a delight. We include one of his final problems. As usual, it would be hard to crack, but some of the other originals should prove more readily amenable to solving!

An easy starter?

In Abdelaziz’s problem, you may at first find it difficult to identify a way to threaten mate next move. If you then settle upon 1.d5! award yourself full marks - though perhaps only if you see the impressive array of nine(!) defences (five by the f3 rook, two by the queen, two by the knight) all of them defeated by different mating moves - a veritable cornucopia of mates!

Not an easy second problem; a very picturesque key!

The key move deserves the two exclamation marks Leonid gives it - 1.♖d6!!. The threat is 2.♖xe6+! ♔xe6 3.♕xf5+ ♔d6 4.♕d5#. 1...f4 is a defence, and there are two more well-deserved exclamation marks for the follow-up 2.♕e4+!!, when the variations are 2...♔xe4 3.♖xe6+ ♔f5 4.♘d4#, 2...♔xd6 3.♕d4+ ♔c6 4.♘a5# and 2...♔f6 3.♕g6+ ♔e5 4.♕(♖)xe6#. Black can try 1...♔f6, when we have 2.♖xf5+ ♔g7 3.♖f7+! ♔xf7 4.♕g6# (3...♔g8 [or h8] 4.♕h7#0. Then there is 1...♔xd6 2.♕d3+ ♔c6 3.♕d4!, with the winning threat of 4.♘a5#. And 1...exd6 2.♕b2+ ♘c3 (making this a full-length variation!) 3.♕xc3+ ♔e4 4.♕d4#. And, finally, 1...♘c3 2.♕xc3+ ♔xd6 3.♕d4+ ♔c6 4.♘a5#.

A cornucopia of sacrifices, probably more than I achieved in decades of over-the-board play!

Once more the murky world of helpmates

Stanislav’s neat three-mover should be not too taxing if you are familiar with helpmates (in which, as you may recall, Black generally initiates the collaborative sequences of moves) - thus we have 1.♗h3+ ♔d4 2.♔g4 ♔e4 3.♖g5 ♘f6# and 1.♖h6 ♔c4 2.♖f6 ♘c5 3.♔e5#. (*Ideal* mates: every unit contributes, and each possible flight square is either blocked or guarded just once.) Ljubomir’s helpmate, characteristically, is a much more heavyweight one, with twists and turns achieving the initially improbable-seeming feat of mating Black: 1.♔c8 ♕xg1 2.♔d8 ♕xh1 3.♔e8 ♕xg2 4.h1=♖+ ♕g1 5.♖h7 ♕xg5 6.♖e7 ♕g8#. The black rook standing initially at h1 can’t get out to block e7, so a replacement must be manufactured on the same square for this purpose!

SOLUTIONS TO ENDGAMES

(See page 700)

Gromov & Pervakov, 2025

1.♗d1+ (1 point) **1...♔a2 2.♘d5 ♘h3+ 3.♔xg2** (+0.5 points = 1.5) **3...♘f4+ 4.♘xf4 ♖b1 5.♗c2** (+0.5 = 2) **5...♖xa1 6.♘fd3** (+0.5 = 2.5) **6...h5 7.♘f3 h4 8.♘d2** (+0.5 = 3) **8...h3+ 9.♔h2** (+1 = 4) **9...♔a3 10.♘c4+ ♔a2 11.♘b4** (+1 = 5) mate. A tough solve. White keeps the Black king and rook bottled up, Black tries to release them by distracting the White king with his h-pawn, also hoping for a drawn Troitsky-line ending with two knights v. pawn; White, however, has just enough time to close the net.

Pervakov & Sumbatyan, 2025

1.♖e7+ (1 point) **1...♔g6 2.♖2e6+** (+1 point = 2) **2...♔h5 3.♗f4** (+1 = 3) **3...♕h1+ 4.♗h2 ♗c8 5.♖h7+** (+0.5 = 3.5) **5...♔g5 6.♖h5+ ♔xh5 7.g4+** (+0.5 = 4) **7...♔g5 8.♖g6+** (+1 = 5) 8...♔xg6 stalemate. Not easy, but do-able, once it occurs to you that it's likely to be a stalemate.

Pervakov, 2025

1.f6 (1 point) **1...♕a6 2.h6** (+ 0.5 points = 1.5) **2...gxh6 3.♔xh6 d4 4.♗xd4 ♖xg5 5.♖a1** (+1 = 2.5) **5...♕d6 6.♖a8+** (+0.5 = 3) **6...♖g8 7.♘e5** (+1 = 4) **7...♕xf6+ 8.♘g6** (+1 = 5) mate. A *really* tough solve, very well done indeed if you found all those moves.

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